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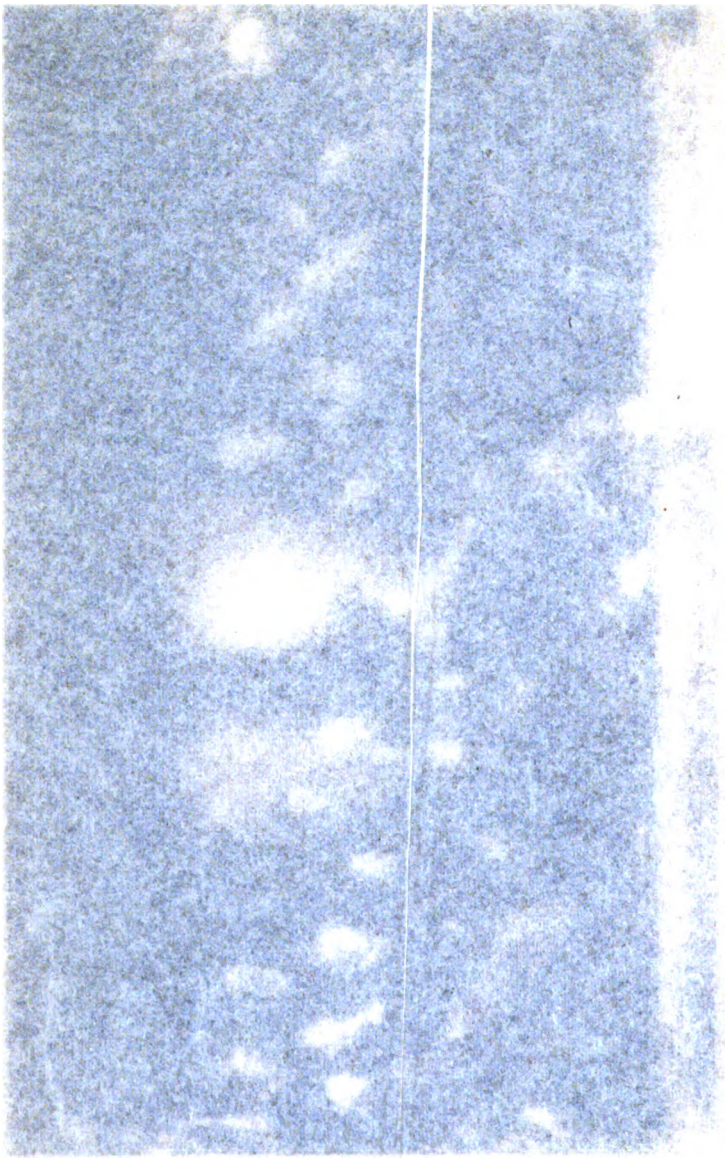

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VAGRANT MEMORIES

BEING FURTHER RECOLLECTIONS

OF OTHER DAYS

BY

WILLIAM WINTER

"Thoughts and remembrance fitted!"

—SHAKESPEARE

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY
1915

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F. C. Chase
Boston

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To

ADA REHAN

With Profound Esteem

And Constant Affection

I Dedicate These Vagrant Memories

To name her is enough—no need to praise—
For in that name the living reason shines
Why she who won it in her golden days
Still has my homage as the sun declines.

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PREFACE

This book, supplementary to the compendium of my recollections called "Other Days" (1908), is intended to depict and commemorate still another group of eminently notable persons, leading representatives of the Stage, past and present, with most of whom I have lived in friendship and all of whom I have carefully and sympathetically observed. My chief purpose in writing these chapters was to provide personal reminiscence, but, while making what I venture to designate authentic vignettes of important and variously interesting actors, I have given essential details of biography and made critical estimate of achievement; and, therefore, I believe that this work will be found a useful contribution to the History of the Stage, and will help to deepen in the minds of my readers a conviction of the vital importance of a rightly conducted Theatre—by which I mean a Theatre that appeals to the highest intelligence and the finest feelings of the public.

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The greater part of this book is new, but in pursuance of a purpose to assemble my writings in a uniform, definitive edition, I have herein included a few passages, revised and improved, from earlier publications of mine which have long been out of print. Parts of this material were originally contributed to "Collier's Weekly" and "The Century Magazine": one chapter of it appeared in "The Saturday Evening Post": that relative to Johnston Forbes-Robertson was written for "The Century," but, because of a change in the editorial policy of that magazine, it was not used as agreed and intended, and the present is its first publication.

All writing about the Stage may, to some readers, seem inopportune and frivolous, at a time when the world is convulsed by a terrific War, affecting every nation,—because waged to determine whether Civilization is to be strangled by arrogant and detestable Military Despotism, or the human race be permitted to advance in the pathway of Liberty ruled and protected by Justice and Law. Such

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writing does not seem so to me. Whether in storm or calm, self-possession is wisdom, and I abide by the counsel of Shakespeare's Imogen: "Stick to your journal course; the breach of custom is breach of all." The poet Whittier felicitously records that, on the famous Dark Day of New England, May 19, 1780, when, because of "the horror of great darkness," the end of the world was believed to be imminent and in one senate chamber the affrighted legislators were tremulous with apprehension, a stalwart member, Abraham Davenport by name, calmly persisted in the performance of duty, saying:

> *"Let God do his work, we will see to ours:*
> *Bring in the candles."*

The example is a good one, even for the memorialist of the Stage. Furthermore, writing in the twilight of fourscore years I have no time to lose and cannot suspend my industry to await the sure, however slow, defeat of a murderous megalomaniac and his deluded followers, and the consequent recurrence of peaceful days.

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In dismissing this book to my readers I would thank Mr. Evert Jansen Wendell, of New York, and Mr. Francis M. Stanwood, of Boston, for kind assistance in obtaining original photographs for some of the Illustrations with which it is embellished; and specially I would thank my son, Mr. Jefferson Winter, for practical help and for invariable encouragement and cheer,—things inexpressibly precious to a worn and tired old writer,—"making the hard way sweet and délectable."

W. W.

Los Angeles, California,
August 20, 1915.

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"I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul rememb'ring my good friends."

SHAKESPEARE.

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I.

WILLIAM WARREN.

1812—1888.

At midnight, in October, 1882, a genial company was assembled in the quaint parlor of an old mansion in Boston, to do honor to one of the greatest actors who have graced our Stage. Afternoon and evening performances had occurred, amid general acclamation, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his first professional appearance, and the purpose of that midnight assemblage was to crown a brilliant occasion of public rejoicing with a private testimonial of affectionate friendship. The actor was William Warren. A committee, of which I was the leader, had been designated to present to him a Loving Cup, the gift of five eminent members of the dramatic profession, and it was my privilege to make the presentation speech.

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The Cup, an exceptionally handsome vessel of its kind, bears this inscription:

To

William Warren

On the Completion of His Fiftieth Year
Upon the Stage
October 27, 1882
From

Joseph Jefferson — *John McCullough*
Edwin Booth — *Lawrence Barrett*
Mary Anderson

In closing my speech I read a poem which I had written, expressive not simply of my admiration for the actor and the man, but of the esteem and affection with which Warren was universally regarded. It truthfully describes him, and the presentment of it is appropriate here:

Red globes of autumn strew the sod,
The bannered woods wear crimson shields,
The aster and the golden-rod
Deck all the fields.

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No clarion blast, at morning blown,
Should greet the way-worn veteran here,
Nor roll of drum nor trumpet-tone
Assail his ear.

No jewelled ensigns now should smite,
With jarring flash, down emerald steeps,
Where sweetly in the sunset light
The valley sleeps.

No bolder ray should bathe this bower
Than when, above the glimmering stream,
The crescent moon, in twilight's hour,
First sheds her beam.

No ruder note should break the thrall
That love and peace and honor weave
Than some lone wild-bird's gentle call,
At summer eve.

But here should float the voice of song,—
Like evening winds in autumn leaves,
Sweet with the balm they waft along
From golden sheaves.

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The sacred past should feel its spell,
And here should murmur, soft and low,
The voices that he loved so well,—
Long, long ago.

The vanished scenes should give to this
The cherished forms of other days,
And rosy lips that felt his kiss
Breathe out his praise.

The comrades of his young renown
Should proudly throng around him now,
When falls the spotless laurel crown
Upon his brow.

Not in their clamorous shouts who make
The noonday pomp of glory's lord
Does the true soul of manhood take
Its high reward.

But when from all the glimmering years
Beneath the moonlight of the past
The strong and tender spirit hears
"Well done," at last;

When love looks forth from heavenly eyes,
And heavenly voices make acclaim,

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And all his deeds of kindness rise
To bless his name;

When all that has been sweetly blends
With all that is, and both revere
The life so lovely in its ends,
So pure, so dear;

Then leaps, indeed, the golden flame
Of blissful pride to rapture's brim,—
The fire that sacramental fame
Has lit for him!

For him who, lord of joy and woe,
Through half a century's snow-white years
Has gently ruled, in humor's glow,
The fount of tears.

True, simple, earnest, patient, kind,
Through griefs that many a weaker will
Had stricken dead, his noble mind
Was constant still.

Sweet, tender, playful, thoughtful, droll,
His gentle genius still has made
Mirth's perfect sunshine in the soul,
And pity's shade,

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With amaranths of eternal spring
Be all his life's calm evening drest,
While summer winds around him sing
The songs of rest!

And thou, O Memory, strange and dread,
That stand'st on heaven's ascending slope,
Lay softly on his reverend head
The wreath of hope!

So softly, when the port he wins,
To which life's happiest breezes blow,
That where earth ends and heaven begins
He shall not know.

HIS STORIED DWELLING PLACE.

The scene of the ceremonial of presentation was a house, since demolished, in Bulfinch Place, at that time a peaceful street, seemingly sequestered, although situated in almost the centre of the old Puritan city. It was No. 2, and was the residence of Miss Amelia Fisher, one of the most decorous and dignified of elderly maiden ladies. Lodging could be obtained there by actors, particularly those of domestic

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taste,—Miss Fisher being a member of the theatrical family of that name, and once an actress,—and the place was a favorite abode of votaries of "the profession." Many eminent players, dead and gone now, have studied, feasted, and slept beneath Miss Fisher's roof.

George Honey, the fine English comedian (the original performer of *Eccles,* in "Caste"), who once lodged there, told me that no one but Warren was permitted to have a latchkey, that every lodger was expected to be in before midnight, and that the landlady would sit in the hall, to admit those who came home late. "When I could not get in till after twelve," he added, "I preferred, after once arriving late, to go to a hotel rather than meet her gaze." But it was a cosey, comfortable, charming retreat, and those survivors of old times who knew it well remember it with great pleasure.

As I recall the incidents of the presentation I can almost see Warren as he then appeared, sitting at the table in Miss Fisher's parlor,—his earnest, whimsical face slightly twitching with emotion,—and slowly turning the silver

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cup from side to side, while his friendly guests waited for his reply. I afterward read in a newspaper that the comedian was "much affected" by the tribute from leaders of the Stage and by my speech and poem, and that "he responded with emotion, in fitting terms." Affected he was, and very deeply, and his agitation manifested itself in the pallor of his countenance and the tremor of his voice. His response was characteristic and directly to the point. He looked at the company, and then, after a pause, he said to Miss Fisher: "You better fill this with champagne and pass it round"; and he said no more. Among his hearers that night were the brilliant comedian James E. Murdoch, the great *Young Mirabel* of his day, and that other brilliant comedian, then a youth, John B. Mason.

That Bulfinch Place lodging house was interesting in itself as well as for its many theatrical associations. The Colonial style of finish, the low ceilings, the neat apartments, the perfect cleanliness and order invested it with a peculiar character, quaint and attractive. I

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first went there in company with Adam Wallace Thaxter, a well-known and widely popular Bostonian of long ago, the dramatic critic of "The Saturday Evening Gazette," to pay my respects to Mrs. Farren, who was acting at the Museum in such plays as "Fazio" and "Lucrezia Borgia," and who (forgotten now) was for a time the queen of many hearts,—mine included. The supper at that house, after the play, was one of the charming features for its inhabitants, —with Warren, wearing a long, loose linen coat over his evening dress, at the head of the table, enlivening the feast with his kindly humor. The actor was in his element then,— the rare, delightful being who combines spontaneous piquancy with intrinsic goodness, geniality with wit, perfect simplicity with superior mental powers, and possesses that fine art of conversation which consists in making others talk well and, instinctively, knowing when to listen and when to speak. Jefferson, Wallack, Davenport, Adams, Couldock, Florence, Rowe, Clarke, Fechter, and many other lights of the Stage were often seated at that festal board,

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and great was the mirth which prevailed there; but we have no "Noctes Ambrosianæ," and it has all gone up the chimney.

BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS.

Warren was born at No. 12 (now 712) Sansom Street, Philadelphia, on November 27, 1812. His parents destined him to mercantile occupation, but his father (the first William Warren, highly distinguished as an actor and long prominent as a manager) became unfortunate and poor, and, dying, left his widow and children in poverty. Friends thereupon organized, for the benefit of Mrs. Warren, a theatrical performance, which occurred at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, on October 27, 1832, and on that occasion William Warren, then in his twentieth year, made his first appearance on the stage, acting *Young Norval,* in the Rev. John Home's tragedy of "Douglas,"—at that time an exceedingly popular play. His acting was esteemed remarkably good, and he was encouraged to discard the occupation of clerk and to adopt the profession of the Stage.

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For several years thereafter he led the life of a roving actor, obtaining employment wherever he could find it, but ultimately he settled in Buffalo, where he became the favorite comedian of the day, at the Eagle Theatre, managed by John Rice, afterward Mayor of Chicago. There he remained till 1846, when he removed to Boston, appearing as *Billy Lackaday,* in "Sweethearts and Wives," October 5 that year, at the Howard Athenæum, under the management of James H. Hackett,—once widely celebrated for his splendid personation of *Falstaff*. At the Howard he acted for twenty weeks, but in August, 1847, he joined the stock company of the Boston Museum, and with that house he was associated, except for one season, until nearly the end of his life. He died, of disease of the brain, at his Bulfinch Place lodging,—which had long been his home and very dear to him,—on September 21, 1888, and was buried at Mount Auburn.

Among "actors of the old school," as they are called,—sometimes in that spirit of derisive contempt which springs from ignorance

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and levity,—there was a sentiment of profound respect, not to say reverence, for the art of acting, such as is not prevalent among actors of the present day. It is known, for example, of the first Joseph Jefferson (1774-1832), renowned on the old Philadelphia Stage (he was the grandfather of the Joseph Jefferson—1829-1905—eminent in our time), that, holding his profession in the highest esteem, he maintained, as to acting, such a dignified reserve that no conversation about theatrical matters was permitted in his family circle. He was a great actor, and he pursued his calling with a conscientious zeal and a severity of decorum befitting the most serious duty and the most influential social station. Much the same austerity was characteristic of that fine comedian and noble gentleman John Gilbert, to whom acting was a learned profession and the Stage not less sacred than the Pulpit.

"AN OLD SCHOOL ACTOR."

William Warren also was an "actor of the old school,"—a typical figure, representative

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of all that was most admirable in the Theatre of the Past and exemplary of all that is most essential in the Theatre of the Present. He was reticent, dignified, courteously formal in social intercourse, faithful to every duty, and scrupulously correct in the conduct of life, and there was in his acting a peculiar charm of personality, a union of intellect, temperament, character, humor, taste, and seemingly spontaneous art, which made it exceedingly delightful. In my young days in Boston (and I believe the public attitude never changed toward him), everybody knew Warren as an actor, and everybody loved him. His professional career extended through a period of nearly fifty-one years, ending on May 12, 1888, when, at the Boston Museum, he made his last appearance, acting *Eccles,* in the fine comedy of "Caste." In the course of those years he acted all the current parts of importance in the lines of old men, low comedy, and eccentric comedy, and also many parts in farce. His repertory was rich in parts of the Shakespearean drama. He was the best *Touchstone* of his professional

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period,—wise, quaint, and philosophical behind the smile and the jest; admirable as *Polonius;* incomparable as *Dogberry;* proficient in every respect as *Launcelot Gobbo, Sir Andrew Aguecheek,* and *Autolycus.* In the comedy of manners, signified by such parts as *Sir Peter Teazle* and *Lord Ogleby,* he was unrivalled, except by John Gilbert. His versatility was amazing; he was equally fine as *Triplet, Michonnet,* and *Jesse Rural,* on the one hand, and *Dr. Pangloss, Eccles,* and *Batkins,* on the other. He was in his seventy-sixth year when he died; he has been dead twenty-seven years; and it is not likely that many persons are extant who possess distinct recollection of what his acting was when he was in his prime. Many playgoers now living, however, have seen kindred art, and have not forgotten it, in the acting of the late Joseph Jefferson,—who was second cousin to him. Among the well-known actors of the present period, moreover, there are two comedians, Nathaniel Carl Goodwin and John Belcher Mason, who, in their novitiate, acted in the same company with him and had experience of his

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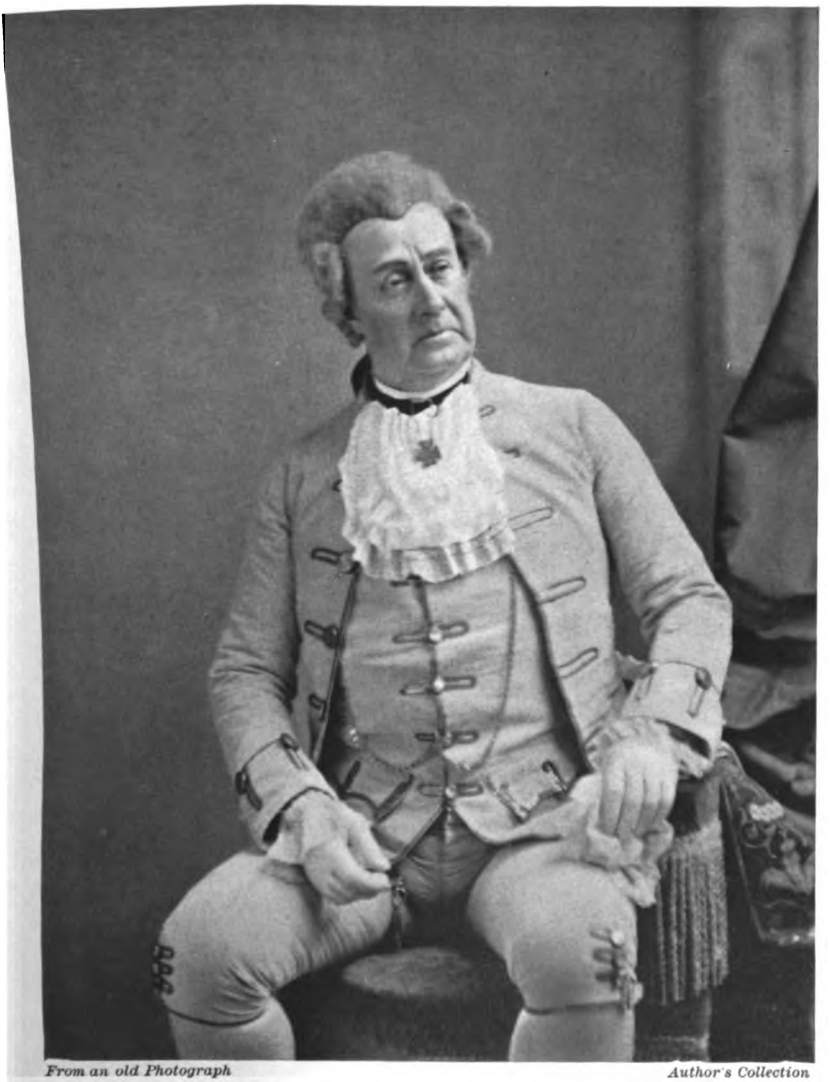

From an old Photograph *Author's Collection*

WILLIAM WARREN

As *SIR PETER TEAZLE*, IN "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL"

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example, and in some respects they indicate his style—Mason, the best and foremost comedian of our Stage at this time (1915), approaching nearer to Warren, and being, indeed, at times startling in resemblance to him, not only in style but in voice and aspect.

CHARACTERISTIC HUMOR AND WIT.

Warren might easily have assumed the position of a star and made the customary annual round of the theatres of America. His repertory was extensive and various, comprising more than 600 parts. He could have selected about a dozen of them, and with a judiciously organized company could have prospered everywhere. Once, in 1864, he left the Boston Museum and made a professional tour, but he did not like the travel and the unsettled way of life, and he gladly returned to his old quarters and his customary routine. A less ambitious actor,—considering his extraordinary ability,—I have not known. His modesty and gentleness, furthermore, were unusual, and they made him one of the most charming of com-

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panions. He never spoke ill of anybody. I remember that an actor from England, named Nelson, was introduced at the Museum, to play one of the parts in which Warren had previously appeared and been cordially approved, and that Warren, who had been a spectator of the performance, was asked for his opinion of it; whereupon he smiled and jocosely said: "I don't think it was one of *Nelson's victories.*" It had, in fact, been a dire failure.

Some persons, even though the fundamental basis of their minds is grave, possess the happy faculty of seeing human life at a comic angle and of expressing their impressions with instant felicity in amusing phrases. When the learned Dr. Parr said to the learned Dr. Porson: "My opinion of you, sir, is *very contemptible!*" the learned Dr. Porson promptly replied: "Sir, I never knew an opinion of yours that was not!" Porson's rejoinder has the celerity of wit, but not its desirable urbanity. Warren's wit, instantaneous and felicitous, was never caustic. He possessed in perfection the faculty of piquant

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repartee; he was a capital story teller; he never uttered a witticism or told a story that was not exactly apposite to some immediate remark or occurrence; and, like Jefferson, he was comically apt in his droll comments on passing events. Once, in a town of the Far West, he chanced to be aroused by a disturbance in the night, caused by a sudden freshet. A torrent was pouring through the street, and Warren, as he stood, with other spectators at a hotel window, gazing on the pluvial tumult, heard a voice crying: "My mother! She's gone—she's gone!" "Well," he said, "she must have *gone by water!*" When Jefferson first went to Boston, acting *Acres,* in his freely adapted and condensed (and much improved) version of Sheridan's comedy, Warren attended the performance. "Did you see Jefferson in 'The Rivals'?" an acquaintance afterward asked him. "Yes," he said, "'The Rivals'—with Sheridan more than twenty miles away!"

Many pious persons believe that the statement "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" occurs in the Bible, whereas, in fact, it

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occurs in the writings of that amazingly clever literary artist, whimsical humorist, and perplexingly elusive character, Laurence Sterne. Miss Fisher was pious, and great was her consternation when, on an exceedingly cold night, the comedian, returning from the Museum after a performance there, entered his lodging with the remark: "I wish they would put *a shorn lamb* at the corner of Tremont and Park streets." Warren's customary homeward walk from the Museum was uphill through Park Street and thence downward to Bulfinch Place; and persons acquainted with Boston are well aware of the icy blast which, in wintry weather, often sweeps over the Common and the region called the Back Bay.

Warren's cheerful temper and his spontaneous, habitual propensity to facetious play on words are, also, shown in all his letters, of which this is an indicative specimen. The poem to which it alludes is one called "The Voice of the Silence," which I delivered before The Society of the Army of the Potomac,—of which I am proud to be an honorary member,—at

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the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, June 6, 1876. The article it mentions, called "Miss Dickinson on Thorns," is a critical one, written by me in "The New York Tribune," June 3, 1876, relative to the acting of Anna E. Dickinson (1842-19—), which elicited remarks from an actor in her company, named Cowper:

"Boston, Mass. [No. 2, Bulfinch Place],
"June 30, 1876.

"My Dear Winter:—

"Many thanks for your favor of the 28th inst. The poem for the 'Army of the Potomac' is very beautiful, quite worthy of the author, and the reading of it was a great treat to me, as I had never before seen a copy. 'Miss Dickinson on Thorns' I read, on the morning of its publication, at the breakfast table, at the Windsor; in his endeavor to refute it Cowper's *Task* was rather too much for him.

"I was very sorry not to have seen you during my three days' stay in New York; but my trip was one at ten minutes' notice, on account of the illness of Miss Fisher's sister, and your address, like the Dutchman's anchor, was at home. It has since been entered

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in my pocket-book, so there's hope of better luck next time.

"Next Wednesday sets me free for a vacation, and a trip to Geneva Lake, Wisconsin, where I have a lot of married nieces, whose husbands, my constructive nephews, are quite anxious to show me hospitalities. I shall take in the Centennial in my native city [Philadelphia] on my return hither, and *en route* hope to catch you at home. Not a line from Joe [Jefferson] lately. Tom Inglis, who has just returned from England, told me that he was putting in three weeks at Manchester.

"We 'gathered [George] Honey' at No. 2, this morning—have only had a glimpse of his blooming visage—he has been 'a bird in the passage' lately. Miss Fisher sends regards.

"Believe me,

"Yours truly,

"W. WARREN."

ANECDOTE AND DETAIL.

Warren was scrupulously correct in the practice of his profession, but once in a while he could not resist the temptation to introduce a "gag." Thus, in the play of "The Drunkard,"

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—a favorite in the old Museum days,—when he was on the scene with *Middleton,* and that reformed inebriate, mournfully moralizing, had exclaimed: "There is the old elm where I slipped and fell," Warren gravely remarked: "That must have been a slippery elm." He did not like the experience of growing old—and, indeed, with slight exception, age is querulous, selfish, and exacting. On hearing a certain wine extolled as excellent because very old, "I am glad," he said, "that age improves anything."

Warren dreaded death and customarily avoided mention of it. He happened to be standing in front of King's Chapel, at the corner of Tremont and Court streets, when the imposing funeral train of Senator Henry Wilson was passing that point, and a lad, who knew him by sight, suddenly accosted him, saying: "It's great, ain't it? But, say, it ain't *anything* to what we'll do for *you,* Mr. Warren, when *you* die!" Warren told that incident to Jefferson, with lively disgust, and Jefferson, in whom the love of fun was irrepressible, told it to me, with lively delight.

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In December, 1894, various articles of personal property that had been owned by Warren were sold at public auction in Boston, at which time his writing desk was "knocked down" for $4.65, his wardrobe for $2.12, his bedstead for $1.30, his clock for 70 cents, and his water pitcher for 15 cents. The silver Loving Cup, of which I have recorded and described the presentation to Warren, escaped that ignominious clearance, having been bequeathed by him to Jefferson. By that actor it was presented to The Players, and it now reposes among their treasures, in the opulent clubhouse given to that organization by Edwin Booth. The first toast ever drunk under the roof,—"To The Players, perpetual prosperity,"—was quaffed from that cup, and from the drinking flagon of the elder Booth, on the night of occupation, December 31, 1888.

As a young man Warren was remarkably proficient in boxing, and his proficiency was backed by uncommon physical strength. His appearance, however, then and at all times, was that of a fastidious person of amiable and gentle

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disposition. He was of a little more than medium stature; his figure was thin; his eyes were blue and of a calm and sweet expression; his garments were always scrupulously neat and fine, and he seemed to be completely pacific. Such men, by their mere presence, sometimes incite the active hostility of natural plebeians. Once, while waiting in front of a railway station in a town in western New York, Warren thus became an object of animosity to a burly vulgarian who was swaggering on the platform, and who, after venting his spite in impudent remarks, which obtained no notice, roughly jostled the actor, thinking thereby to amuse certain of the bystanders of his own kind. The effect of his insolence was not what he had expected, for Warren instantly struck him a blow which hurled him heels over head and knocked him senseless; and this without the least apparent excitement or effort.

In early life Warren was improvident, but a sensible friend of his, Henry Lee (died, 1898), persuaded him to invest a small sum of money, with a view to the future, and the investment

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proving fortunate he was encouraged in the habit of thrift. When I was a lad I sometimes saw him going into or coming out of offices in State Street, which then was, and which continues to be, the Wall Street of Boston. Little did I dream that the time would ever come when the admired actor would be a warm personal friend of mine, and that I should ever participate in recording and celebrating his achievements and doing him public honor; for then I was only a vagrant boy, habitually roaming the waterside from South Boston Bridge to Constitution Wharf, and much more likely to run away to sea, like my progenitors, all of whom were sailors, than live to labor as an historian and a critic of the acted drama and as friend and adviser of many actors. My personal acquaintance with Warren began as long ago as 1856, but my acquaintance with him as an actor began when, years before then, I saw him for the first time in the spectacle of "Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp,"—and the delight with which I beheld that spectacle and the joy with which I looked on the player

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who supplied the mirth in it were such as I have seldom known since, and can never know again.

Warren was a bachelor. He lived in comfort. His salary as an actor was, for those days, a large one, and he saved a considerable part of what he earned. The actual value of the property that he owned has not been made known, but after his death it was stated that he left more than $100,000,—a large fortune, for the greater part the product of his individual labor. He was not penurious, but he was prudent, and in his prudence he was comically eccentric. A friend once asked him why he did not keep a carriage. "I do," he replied; "I take a drive almost every fine day,—on the front seat of one of the horse cars that go out to Roxbury. You've no idea how safe and comfortable it is. The horses never run away, and I'm never in danger, and never frightened."

INFLUENCE OF *HAPPY* ACTORS.

There was a time, I believe,—or is it a dream? —when actors existed whose presence made an

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audience sweetly and comfortably *glad.* I have read of the elder Jefferson that "when he acted, families all went together, old and young. Smiles were on every face; the town was *happy.*" Burton caused that effect,—so humorous and touching as *Cap'n Cuttle.* Blake caused it,—so droll and winning as *Jesse Rural.* Charles Wheatleigh caused it,—so quaint, comic, and sympathetic as *Triplet.* I do not know of any actor who causes that effect on the audience now. There are actors who make laughter, but the heart is not in it. The method of their acting is often clever, but it is hard, brittle, metallic, sometimes even cynical, and the response of mirth is superficial. When Warren's voice was heard, "speaking off,"—as sometimes happened, before he made his first entrance,—a thrill of joy went through the house. Affection mingled with admiration for that comedian. His coming was that of a friend. He seemed to bring with him a sense of the reality of everything good and kind and to invest the theatre with the gentle atmosphere of home, and the spectator forgot

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WILLIAM WARREN

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that there was any such thing as care in the world.

It has been customary, from time immemorial, for rueful writers, when moralizing on the deplorable condition of the present, to eulogize a condition, declared to have been much better, in a distant past. In 1811 the poet Moore wrote that "an author who hopes for success on the stage must fall in with popular taste, which is now at the last gasp, and past all cure." In 1826 the English biographer and critic Boaden said: "We surely cannot hide from ourselves that the drama has declined to a state disgraceful to the high character of the country." In 1834 that experienced observer Thomas Raikes, a man who thoroughly knew society, mournfully recorded, in his entertaining "Journal," that "the old school" had become "completely extinct." The fact is that, in the long backward of continuously advancing civilization, bright epochs have alternated with dark epochs, precisely as they are doing now and as, doubtless, they will continue to do. The "old school" is not extinct, of either gen-

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tlemen or actors. In the immediate present, which is seething and turbulent, certain reprehensible forces are in many places visible and in some places dominant; they are particularly so in the American Theatre; and actors worthy to be named with William Warren are not numerous. The right spirit, however, is not dead. Nobility of manhood, dignity of character, chivalrous feeling, and devotion to high ideals are still in the world. Wrong does not remain permanently in the saddle. Reaction is a law of Nature, and it is inevitable. The excesses from which our Stage is now suffering will wear themselves away. It may be long before such tragedians again appear as the elder Booth and the elder Wallack, or such comedians as Placide, Burton, Gilbert, Jefferson, and Warren; but that they *will* appear should not be doubted. Genius is a part of the immortal inspiring vitality which flows through all created things, and the human heart will always respond to it. Warren was a comedian who could make you laugh and also could make you weep: he could bring the tear to the

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eyes and the laugh to the lips at the same moment: and the actor who can do what Warren did will never do it in vain. The wonderful discoveries of science within the last one hundred years have greatly promoted the material advancement of society, but the diffusion of contentment, the making of a prosperous, *happy* people, which should be the crowning result of civilization, is dependent not on material but on spiritual advancement,—the stimulation of noble purpose and generous feeling, the spread of refinement and grace of manners,—and for that result society must look to the ministry of the arts, and largely to the Stage, which has become a tremendous power. Such actors as Warren are in the highest degree public benefactors, because they refine, cheer, and help, bringing happiness, and

> "Leaving on the mountain tops of Death
> A light that makes them lovely."

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II.

SISTER STARS:

LAURA KEENE AND MATILDA HERON.

I.—LAURA KEENE, 1820—1873.

THERE is a kind of woman who inspires at once sympathy and a cautious reserve. In appearance she is almost seraphic; in temperament, severe. All that I saw and heard of Laura Keene, when she was managing her theatre in New York, about fifty-five years ago, caused me to consider her a woman of that kind. By the members of her theatrical company, over whom she ruled with imperious, sometimes even arrogant, authority, she was called "The Duchess." There is a way of government which maintains dominance and obtains implicit obedience without wounding the pride or hurting the feelings of anybody who may happen to be in a subservient posi-

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tion. That was not the way of Laura Keene, who looked like an angel, but was, in fact, a martinet. You could not help liking her, and at the same time you could not quite escape the intuition that she was a person of impetuous and fiery temper. But she was a remarkable figure on the Stage of her day, and although, in this book of reminiscence, I can only make a cameo of her, I am unwilling to leave her out.

At a time when she was active in securing relief for that strange being Matilda Heron she was named as one of Matilda's "sister stars": though they were never closely associated, their careers were substantially concurrent; and her activity in that benevolent cause has linked the two women in my remembrance under that designation. Poor Matilda's need was distressful, and Laura Keene busied herself in organizing a movement for the benefit of that unfortunate actress, which was carried to a successful result largely because of her expeditious zeal. At that time, when I had gladly done what I could to assist the enterprise, I

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received from her a letter which is interesting as characteristic of her promptitude of practical action and also of her temperamental causticity:

"34, Bond Street, New York,
"January 11, 1872.

"My dear Mr. Winter:—

"Your kind and very just notice received by the ladies of Miss Heron's Committee with gratitude. We were certain sickness prevented an earlier response.

"Convey our thanks to your lady, our regrets at the cause of her absence on such an occasion.

"You can, indeed, help us. May I suggest how?

"Tell the Public Matilda is penniless—starving! Public will shrug its shoulders—very sorry!

"Tell them it's going to be an ultra-fashionable Matinée: all the private boxes sold at $25 and $50 (*true!*): all the stalls going at high prices. Then the generous Public will want 'Standing Room Only,' immediately. In great haste.

"Very truly,
"Laura Keene."

No authentic, detailed account exists of the origin and early life of Laura Keene. All

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accounts agree that she was born in London. One recorder gives the date of her birth as 1830 and says he has "heard" that her family name was Lee. Her principal biographer, John Creahan, who appears to have had ampler opportunity than he improved of ascertaining the facts of her history, states that her birth occurred in 1826; Ireland, always careful and almost invariably correct, places it in 1820. Creahan alleges that "while yet a girl she heard something of Rachel, then in the very zenith of her fame," and adds the statement that "Laura Keene often reverted to this with enthusiasm, as helping to determine a passion for dramatic pursuits." Rachel (1820-1858) acted in London in 1841 and again in 1842. Miss Keene, whether as a girl of fifteen or a woman of twenty-one, could have seen her, and Miss Keene's acting, in after years, afforded indication that she had done so, and at an age when it was possible for her to have profited by the spectacle. Creahan also alleges that "Miss Keene's first experience of stage life was with Mme. Vestris, then, or subsequently, Mrs.

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Charles Mathews,"—adding that "after a time Laura Keene appeared as *Pauline,* in 'The Lady of Lyons,' at the Olympic Theatre." Eliza Vestris controlled the London Olympic from January 8, 1831, to May 31, 1839, when she retired from it, to become manager of Covent Garden, an office which she held from September 30, 1839, to April 30, 1842. The comedy of "The Lady of Lyons" was owned by Macready, and the first performance of it ever given occurred February 27, 1838, at Covent Garden, with Helena Faucit as *Pauline* and Macready as *Claude Melnotte.* There is no record showing that it was ever produced by Mme. Vestris, or that Miss Keene was associated with her, at either the Olympic or Covent Garden. Mme. Vestris, it may be well incidentally to note, having married Charles Mathews, July 18, 1838, came with him to New York, in that year, leaving the Olympic in charge of Planché: her stay in America was brief. As to the first appearance and as to the professional novitiate of Miss Keene no writer has furnished clear and exact information. She was not employed

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by Mme. Vestris till after that actress assumed management of the London Lyceum, October 18, 1847: she is mentioned as having acted one of the principal parts in "A Chain of Events," presented at that theatre in the Spring of 1852. It is inferrible that she had been for some time on the stage and was an experienced actress. She was then known, in private life, as Mrs. John Taylor, and was the mother of two daughters. The elder Wallack was instrumental in bringing her to America.

Laura Keene's first appearance on the American Stage was made, September 20, 1852, at Wallack's Theatre (the Broadway and Broome Street house), in "The Will," a comedy by the prolific dramatist Frederic Reynolds. That play was first produced April 19, 1797, at Drury Lane, London, and it long remained popular. *Albina Mandeville* was first acted by the fascinating Mrs. Jordan. In the chief situation *Albina* destroys an unjust Will, made in her own favor. Miss Keene was admirable in the part, and gained immediate popularity. She was subsequently seen in a variety of charac-

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ters, among them being *Beatrice* and *Rosalind.* She did not, however, long remain under Wallack's management, but, suddenly determining to be a star and also to manage for herself, she abruptly retired from his theatre, left New York, repaired to Baltimore, opened a theatre there,—which did not prosper,—and then wandered into the West and visited California and Australia, not again appearing in the capital till December, 1855, when she opened, under the name of Laura Keene's Varieties, the house which had been known as the Metropolitan and which eventually became the Winter Garden. The once favorite play of "The Marble Heart" (or "Marble Hearts"), first presented in America, at San Francisco, by Catherine Sinclair,—who had been Mrs. Edwin Forrest,—was there acted for the first time in New York, Laura Keene impersonating *Marco,* a part in which she greatly excelled, and in which she remained unequalled. On November 18, 1856, she opened Laura Keene's Theatre, at No. 622 Broadway, which she conducted almost continuously,—making many notable presentations,—till the

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summer of 1863, when it was leased by John Duff, named the Olympic, and committed to the management of Mrs. John Wood. Many players of rare ability and some of the first rank appeared at Laura Keene's Theatre,—among them being Joseph Jefferson, Dion Boucicault, Charles Walter Couldock, Edward A. Sothern, James H. Stoddart, Charles Wheatleigh, George Jordan, William Rufus Blake, Charles M. Walcot, William P. Davidge, A. H. Davenport, Mark Smith, Charles Fisher, James S. Browne, Edwin Varrey, Agnes Robertson, Sara Stevens, Mary Wells, Ida Vernon, Charlotte Thompson, Mrs. W. H. Smith, and Mme. Ponisi. There "King Louis XI." was presented, Couldock giving his fine performance of the sinister, fanatical monarch. There Jefferson began to rise into fame, as *Asa Trenchard;* there Sothern laid the foundation of his prodigious popularity as *Lord Dundreary;* there Boucicault's "Heart of Midlothian" and "Colleen Bawn,"—both remarkably clever plays,—were first launched upon the tide of popularity; and there Miss Keene herself manifested excep-

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tional versatility of talent and much enhanced her professional reputation.

The spirit of this actress was always restless. Alert and enterprising, she seldom was judicious. Her defection from Wallack was a mistake, and so was her abandonment of her theatre. She had, however, grown weary of managerial labor, and for several years after leaving New York, in 1863, she wandered, as a star, from city to city. In the Spring of 1865 she chanced to be acting at Ford's Theatre, Washington, and on the night of the fatal April 14, when President Lincoln was assassinated in that house, she was on the stage, as *Florence Trenchard,* in "Our American Cousin,"—standing so close to the wing, on the prompt-side, that the assassin, as he rushed toward the stage-door, brushed against her in passing. From the effect of the shock that she received, on that terrible night, it was said by her relatives that she never entirely recovered. In 1868 she made a visit to her native land. In 1869 she was lessee and manager of the old Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, where she acted *Marco,*

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Gilberte, in "Frou-Frou"; *Mary Leigh,* in Boucicault's "Hunted Down," and other parts, and made a vigorous, creditable, but not remunerative, effort to maintain a stage devoted to "the legitimate drama." In 1870 she appeared at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, New York, in association with the eminent English actor William Creswick, in a play called "Nobody's Child," but her health had been much impaired, and it was then sadly manifest that her powers were failing. She continued on the stage, intermittently, till the Spring of 1873. Her last appearance in New York was made at Wood's Museum, the building which ultimately became Daly's Theatre. She died, of consumption, at Montclair, New Jersey, November 4, 1873, and was buried in Greenwood.

Laura Keene was exceptionally handsome. Her person was tall, slender, and symmetrical. Her head was finely shaped; her face was slightly aquiline; her complexion was fair; her hair was of a dark chestnut color; her features were regular; her eyes were large, dark, brilliant, and exceedingly expressive; she possessed

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a clear, copious, musical voice, and she was graceful in her movements and lovely in statuesque poses,—which she frequently assumed. She often wore white garments, which enhanced an attribute of spirituality in her appearance. One of her peculiarities, in acting, was a swift, gliding movement, which was remarkably effective: another was the singular expedient, by way of expressing emotion, of rapidly and continuously blinking her eyes. She could effectively exhibit the recklessness of headlong passion and the pathetic abandonment of despair. Her range was uncommonly wide. She was, for example, perfection as *Marco,* in "The Marble Heart," and also as *Cicely Homespun,* in "The Heir-at-Law,"—thus presenting a surprising contrast between proud, dazzling beauty and hard, insensate, icy, cruel selfishness, on the one hand, and simple, rustic prettiness and artless, confiding affection, on the other. Among her best personations, as I remember them,—besides *Marco,*—were *Peg Woffington,* in "Masks and Faces"; *Ogarita,* in "The Sea of Ice"; *Miss Hardcastle,* in "She Stoops to Con-

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quer"; *Effie Deans,* in "The Heart of Midlothian"; *Becky Sharp,* in "Vanity Fair"; *Florence Trenchard,* in "Our American Cousin"; *Lady Alice Hawthorne,* in "Old Heads and Young Hearts," and *Ann Chute,* in "The Colleen Bawn." She acted more than 150 parts, of record, and in all of them she was expert. In the latter part of her career she inclined toward tiresome, ultra-emotional drama of the hydrostatic order, acting such parts as *Camille, Lady Isabel,* in "East Lynne"; *Gilberte,* in "Frou-Frou," and *Lady Dedlock,* in "Bleak House," and she played them all well and was admired in them; but, while her appeal to "tear-falling pity" was cogent, her highest manifestations of histrionic ability and art were made in glittering comedy parts,—*Peg Woffington, Lady Teazle, Marco, Lady Gay Spanker,* etc., —and in some scenes of sentimental drama. Her impersonation of *Peg Woffington* did not excel the earlier and remarkably affecting performance of that part given by Mrs. Farren, but it has not since been equalled. With the extraordinary talents that she possessed she was

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fitted to have made a much more profound impression than she did make on the Stage and the Society of her period. She impressed me as self-willed, volatile, capricious, and imperious. Not impossibly the influence exerted upon her early in life by Mme. Vestris fostered in her a combative egotism and a cynical spirit. In her first marriage she was unfortunate and unhappy, and domestic unhappiness, naturally, embitters the mind and often hardens the heart. "She was charitable," so wrote Joseph Jefferson, who knew her well; "she had a good heart. I never heard her speak ill of anybody but herself; and this she would sometimes do with a grim humor that was very entertaining." In her second marriage (she became, in 1860, the wife of John Lutz, who died in 1869) she found content. Lutz was not precisely a *Grandison,* but he was sensible and kind, and a shrewd business manager. One of her latest industries was the publication of a magazine, called "Fine Arts," to which, during the brief term of its existence, she was a continuous contributor. She also appeared as a lecturer. Her

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From an old Photograph *Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

LAURA KEENE

From a Steel Engraving ***Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.***

MATILDA HERON

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last days were sorrowful. I believe she must have realized,—as many others in her profession have done,—that she had wasted much talent and opportunity. With more stability of character and with inflexibility of high purpose she might have gained a permanent rather than an evanescent renown. While thinking of her with admiration, it is scarcely possible, even at this long distance from the time of her feverish exploits and her melancholy end, to think of her without a certain sense of regretful disappointment.

II.—MATILDA HERON, 1830—1877.

The last time I met Matilda Heron,—it was not very long before her death,—she clasped me in her arms, almost lifted me from the floor, kissed me on the forehead, and impetuously exclaimed: "Willy Winter, *you* put the first gray hair in my head that ever was there!" This fervid assurance was allusive to articles that I had written, in the newspaper press, condemnatory of the pernicious influence of the play of "Camille," to the exposition of which

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she had been devoted during the greater part of her career. No discussion of the subject ensued. Indeed, discussion of any subject with that wild, impulsive, eccentric being was at all times impossible. Her gray hairs, it is right to say, were not caused by any person's criticism. For many years she was a prosperous actress and an object of enthusiastic and often extravagant adulation. In her time of success she had everything her own way, and, more than probably, at all times she considered herself to be in the right. When she stated her own case she spoke as she felt, and she was facile in the use of striking figures of speech. It is recorded that the last words she ever spoke were: "Tilly never did harm to any one—poor Tilly is so happy." A more original, lawless, interesting woman, among the luminaries of the Stage, I have not known,—or, unless it be Ellen Terry, one so elusive of complete comprehension and competent portrayal.

Heron is an old theatrical name. Mrs. Mary Heron acted at Drury Lane, London, in 1721,

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and thereafter, and it is recorded that Colley Cibber trained her to perform *Lady Betty Modish,* in "The Careless Husband," and *Lady Townly,* in "The Provoked Husband." She died in 1786. I know not whether she was a far-away progenitor of Matilda Heron, but she may have been. Matilda was of Irish descent, born in Londonderry, December 1, 1830. The accounts which exist of her family antecedents and of her surroundings in early life are conflictive, scattering, and unsure. One record states that her parents were poor, were holders of a small farm in Ireland, emigrated to America when she was in her twelfth year (1842) and settled in Philadelphia, where she attended school and where her father died. Another record, made by the veteran actor, manager, and theatrical annalist Noah Miller Ludlow (1795-1886), states that "the Heron Family, consisting of Mrs. Heron and her daughters, Matilda, Fanny, and Agnes," appeared at his theatre, the St. Charles, New Orleans, in February, 1849, and that Matilda acted *The Four Mowbrays,* in the farce of "Old

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and Young," and also *Tom Tug,* in the comic opera of "The Waterman." "The eldest of these sisters," says Ludlow, "was, in after life, one of the earliest performers of *Camille,* in a play translated by her from the French, which became popular from the skilful rendition by Miss Heron of the principal character." Ireland mentions Agnes and Fanny Heron, but not Matilda, as having appeared in New York at the old Park Theatre, late in 1847, and says they came "from the Dublin Stage." All three of those girls appear to have been measurably proficient in both acting and singing. Among the farces which they presented were "The Spoiled Child," "The Irish Tutor," "Born to Good Luck," and "Box and Cox." Ludlow specially praises Matilda for her performance of *Margery,* in "The Rough Diamond." She must have been more than commonly able and practised to have succeeded, as apparently she did, in personating *Tom Tug,* a part which had taxed the talents of such an accomplished actor as John Hodgkinson (1798) and such reputedly fine

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singers as Joseph Wood (1833) and John Wilson (1838).

It might, perhaps, reasonably be conjectured that Matilda, as well as her sisters (if such they were) Agnes and Fanny, received some training on the stage in Ireland before she was brought to America. Henry Edwards, the comedian, however, wrote of her that in girlhood, in Philadelphia, she saw performances at the Walnut Street Theatre, was thus allured to the Stage, placed herself under the tuition of Peter Richings, and made her first professional appearance in 1851. Peter Richings (1796-1871), whom aged playgoers, possibly, still remember as the excellent representative of *General Washington* and as a good singer in light opera, certainly was an instructor in acting as well as a fine actor, and Matilda would have needed instruction before undertaking such a heavy and exacting part as *Bianca,* in the tragedy of "Fazio." She played it, February 17, 1851, at the Walnut Street Theatre, and she appears to have given an auspicious performance. Her career thenceforward was sepa-

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rate and independent. As to the sisters, Agnes and Fanny Heron, Ireland ascertained that they, eventually, devoted themselves exclusively to music, received instruction from Signor Natale Perelli, and as Señorita Agnese Natali and Señorita Francesca Natali became favorites on the Lyric Stage, in Mexico and South America. On August 28, 1852, Matilda appeared at the Bowery Theatre, New York, under Hamblin's management, and in the course of her engagement there acted *Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Mrs. Haller, Ophelia, Parthenia,* and *Pauline,*—about as singular and contrasted a conglomerate of characters as one actress ever attempted in a single engagement. In 1853 she visited California, appearing, December 26, at the American Theatre, San Francisco, as *Bianca,* with John Lewis Baker as *Fazio.* Her success there was immediate, her popularity great. On June 10, 1854, in San Francisco, she was married to Henry Herbert Byrne, between whom and herself a permanent separation ensued, three months later. "The cause of the separation,"—so wrote Henry Edwards,

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in 1887,—"is shrouded, even now, in the deepest mystery; . . . but, whatever it might have been, the two lives affected by it felt its force, and carried it with them to their graves." Byrne died in 1872.

In 1855 Matilda Heron was in Paris, where she saw the performance by Mme. Doche of *Marguerite Gauthier,* in "La Dame aux Camélias," and was deeply affected by it,—so deeply that she was moved to translate and adapt the play for her own immediate use in America. Her version of it, entitled "Camille," was presented by her in October, 1855, and from that time onward, for many years, she made *Camille* the principal feature of her repertory. Her first representation of the part in New York occurred on January 22, 1857, at Wallack's Theatre; Edward A. Sothern played the lover, *Armand Duval.* She was not the original representative of *Camille* in America; the part had previously been acted here (1853) by Jean Davenport,—afterward Mrs. Lander; but Matilda made it her own, and she long remained preëminent in it, and eventually was the means

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of raising a considerable crop of juvenile *Camilles,* who coughed and snivelled and expired, "to melt the waxen hearts of men," throughout all the theatres of America. On December 24, 1857, she was married to Robert Stoepel,—remembered as a fine musician,—with whom she seems to have lived unhappily, and from whom she separated in 1869.

Soon after Longfellow's poem of "Hiawatha" was published (1855) Stoepel composed music illustratively expressive of its spirit, and Matilda gave public readings of the poem with that accompaniment, beginning in Boston and continuing in other cities. That entertainment she gave in London, in 1860-'61, and also she acted there, as *Florence Upperton,* in one of her own plays (she was the author or adapter of several dramas), called "New Year's Eve," —later presented by her, in New York, under the name of "The Belle of the Season." On leaving London, in 1861, she made a short tour in France and Germany, returning to America in 1862. She was in California in 1865, and was again the recipient of unstinted admira-

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tion and honor there. Then and thereafter *Camille* was her chief professional magnet. Her repertory was not very large. Among the parts that she acted, besides those already mentioned, are *Julia,* in "The Hunchback"; *Juliana,* in "The Honeymoon"; the *Countess,* in "Love"; *Mariana,* in "The Wife"; *Leonore,* in "The World's Own," a play written for her by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe; *Medea, Gamea, Lesbia, Sybil, Mathilde,* and *Aurora Floyd.* Toward the end of her life, under the accumulated burdens of misfortune and domestic trouble, she became wretchedly poor. A performance for her benefit occurred at Niblo's Garden, January 17, 1872, in which Edwin Booth, Mark Smith, Laura Keene, Fanny Janauschek, and others participated, and which yielded $4,890 for the beneficiary. A touching address was delivered by the actress, in which she said: "I am but a poor, humble woman, and it may be a consolation to you to know and feel, when you go home to-night, that you have raised a woman out of the depth of misery and despair; that you have provided sustenance for the moment and given

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her hopes for the future. New life has come to me through your kindness, and far beyond all else I am thankful to you that your presence here enables me to look with calmness on the bitter past." The relief proved only temporary. "The close of her life," said Edwards, "was of the saddest character. . . . Poor in the bitterest acceptation of the term, prematurely old, and with the once sparkling intellect dimmed and gone astray, she presented a spectacle . . . that the coldest heart could but regard with pity." She died, May 7, 1877, and was buried in Greenwood.

Matilda Heron, as an actress, was at her best in the part of *Camille.* Other parts she *acted;* that one she *lived.* When first I saw her, in that character, in Boston, in 1857, she could, and did, so deeply affect the feelings and so entirely beguile the sympathies as to confuse, if not destroy, perception of the difference between right and wrong. That the courtesan and the virtuous woman are alike pure—that chastity is immaterial—is the chief meaning conveyed by the sophistry of the play, in which

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Matilda gave a performance of such tremendous vitality and overwhelming power. She was radiantly beautiful. Her person was superb. Her features were regular; her eyes were dark blue and of dazzling brilliancy; her hair was dark and abundant, and her complexion fair. Her voice was singularly sympathetic and thrilling. She radiated a force of magnetic emotion which it was impossible to resist. In later times I became quite able to see and hear her without being in the least beguiled or bewildered; but it was not so at first. She never acted *Camille* better than she did in her earliest presentments of it. She had found a part which provided the agonized and agonizing situations essential for the liberation and complete display and utterance of her tempestuous spirit. She loved the storm and revelled in the frenzy of a nature at war with itself. Once, speaking to a writer, about a play that she wished should be written for her, she wildly exclaimed, "Give me a *lost* woman!" I know not why a woman "lost" should be thought to be more dramatic than a woman "found," but that was the kind of

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woman Matilda preferred to represent, and beyond question she made her intensely and movingly dramatic. When, as *Camille,* she rushed toward the footlights, sobbing out the words of mingled wonder and shame "Respect me—and in this house!" she fairly wrung the hearts of her auditors; and in the crucial scene, —theatrically one of supreme ingenuity,—in which *Camille* parts from the lover whom she must renounce and means never to see again, her agony was so great and, in effect, so poignantly actual that, almost invariably, her audience became convulsed with grief.

Matilda Heron knew what it is to love, and what it is to suffer through the truth and through the consequences of that tremendous passion,—sometimes so harrowing in its intensity, often so afflicting in its disastrous and destructive results—and that knowledge invested her acting with insuperable authority. Her power was not that of the imagination, which enables the actor to incarnate an ideal, to embody a poetic creation, such as *Lady Macbeth,* but that of the woman's heart, which has

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sounded every depth of passion and comprehended all possible experience of woman, in that beautiful and terrible realm of love which is so essentially her own; and while she was thus human in feeling she was strong, often weird, in her personality. All her ways were individual. The eye followed her with delight, at absolute newness and indubitable sincerity. She did not satisfy taste and judgment as to classic forms; her *Medea* was half a prowling maniac and half a slattern gypsy, the only merit of it consisting in occasional gleams of fateful fury, like intermittent flickering of fire from a slumbering volcano; and for parts that require repose, dignity, symmetry, and grace her tempestuous style made her unsuitable. She was an exponent of the elemental passions, in their universal flow and ebb; she was the whirlwind, not the zephyr. That kind of nature, unless curbed by dominant intellect and regulated by strong moral sense, inevitably breaks all the bounds of reason, convention, and a serene life. Matilda Heron's career was gloriously bright for a while, and then dark with trouble

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and sorrow. It is easy for the moralist to say that she brought her miseries upon herself; it is,—as in all such cases,—more true and wise to say that Fate, which is Character, made her what she was, and shaped and ruled the current of her destiny. In her ministration of the Stage she was actuated by a profound, passionate, virtuous sincerity. Despite the comparative ignominy of her principal dramatic theme and the palpable fallacy of her quite involuntary moral teaching, it is certain that her acting of *Camille* touched, in thousands of hearts, the spring of gentle charity, and that it dealt a blow which staggered alike the canting Pharisee and the canting sensualist, who talks virtue while living vice. She was a magnanimous, great-hearted, loving woman, and she was one of the most potent elemental forces in the histrionic vocation that have ever been exerted on the American Stage.

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III.

LESTER WALLACK.

1820—1888.

An old lady, long ago dead, speaking to me of the brilliant comedian Lester Wallack, with whom she was acquainted, made use of a novel designation: "He thinks," she said, "that he is the Devil on runners!" She had been impressed, I suppose, by his superlative self-confidence and authoritative manner, which she had mistaken for egregious vanity. It was characteristic of him to be not selfish, but self-centred; not to undervalue other persons, but not to concern himself particularly about them, and not readily to admire anybody. When he did admire, however, his feeling was ardent. The old Duke of Wellington was, to him, an object of reverence, almost of adoration. He fervently admired Macready; I remember he spoke to me, with passionate

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enthusiasm, about that actor's great performance of *Virginius* as something never equalled and transcendent of all praise. He cherished the memory and extolled the genius of the elder Tyrone Power, whom, in youth, he had often seen, and on whose acting he had modelled his style. He spoke with cordial esteem of the elder Farren, Helena Faucit, and the "glorious" Louisa Nisbett. He was, however, disinclined to hero-worship, and his manner was assertive rather than conciliatory. If the objects of his homage were few, they were those by whom homage was deserved. If he ever seemed haughty and distant, it was not because he was either cold or insensible, but because he was reticent and because he was concentrated on his own concerns. I knew Lester Wallack very well; saw him often on the stage; was often in his society, and had many opportunities of observing him in a friendly association extending over a period of nearly thirty years. He held himself in high esteem, but he was neither egotistic nor conceited. There was good reason for his self-confidence, and it was becoming to

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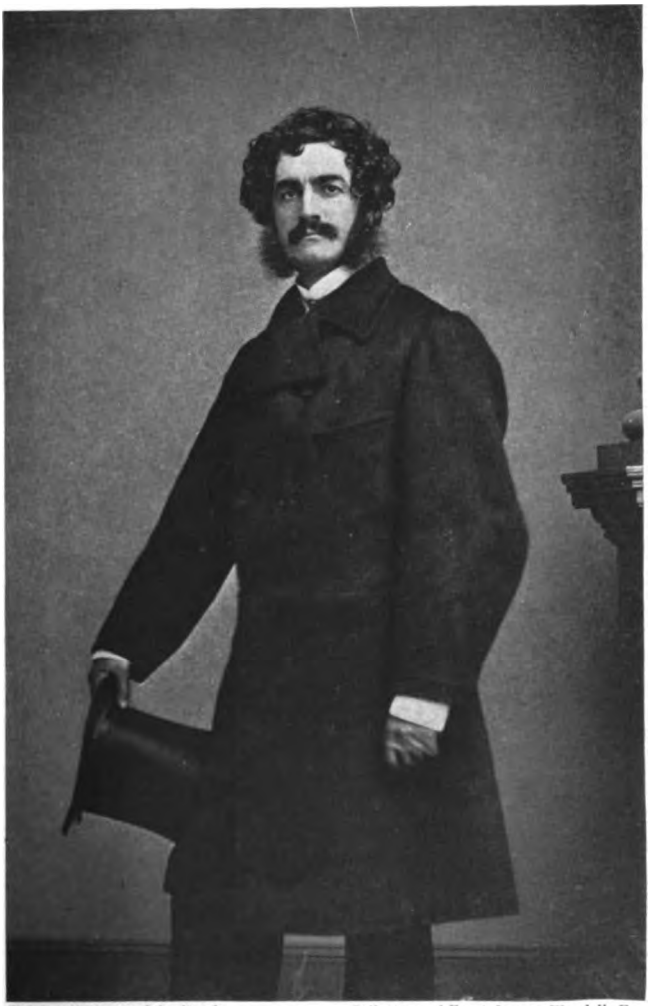

From a Photograph by Brady *Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

LESTER WALLACK, ABOUT 1855

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him. He possessed uncommon advantages. His person was manly, his face handsome, his voice clear, resonant, and pleasing, his demeanor dignified and graceful, his temperament genial, his mind well stored with knowledge, and his faculties were matured by experience. His talents, as an actor, a manager, and a dramatist, were extraordinary, and his accomplishments were many and varied. In comedy, particularly of the gossamer kind,—which is the most exacting,—he was superb, and in romantic drama he ranked with the best performers of the period in which he lived. He was an expert stage-director and a felicitous public speaker. He conversed easily and agreeably and was a capital singer, and, accordingly, he was one of the most delightful of boon companions. By his few close friends, who knew the simplicity of his nature and the kindness of his heart, he was dearly loved. The admiration of the public continually,—and naturally,—followed him; and as I look back to the period of his prime, about 1859 to 1877, and consider what he was and what he did, I cannot wonder that he, who had

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become a favorite with everybody else, should have found favor with himself.

AN HISTRIONIC LINE.

Lester Wallack inherited a strong propensity to histrionic expression. His more immediate ancestors were members of the Stage. His paternal grandfather was William Wallack and his paternal grandmother was Elizabeth Field (both, 1760-1850), Mrs. Granger, widow of a doctor when she married Wallack. She is mentioned as having been "at one time *a leading* member of Garrick's company" (Hutton), but as her birth date was 1760, and Garrick retired from the Stage in 1776, that would seem to be an error. Marshall states that Mary Johannot (daughter of Richard Johannot, an expert mimic and a clever performer in farce) was the wife of Wallack, but that, also, appears to be an error. William Wallack was particularly distinguished for excellent impersonation of nautical characters, and also for pleasing vocalism; the favorite ballad, "Bound 'Prentice to a Waterman," was

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written for his use, and his singing made it famous. All the children of William Wallack and his wife adopted the profession of the Stage, and each of them gained more or less theatrical repute. Those children were Henry John (1790-1870); James William (1795-1864); Mary,—familiarly called "Poll Wallack," and Elizabeth, Mrs. Pincott. The latter, more a singer than an actress (she was associated with the English Opera House, London), never came to America, but Henry, James, and Mary were prominent on the American Stage. Henry Wallack's spirited performance of *Squire Broadlands,* in "The Country Squire," in the course of which he sang, with deep feeling, the song of "The Fine Old English Gentleman," I still sympathetically remember, though the actor has (1915) been dead forty-five years. Mary Wallack pleased the American Public, first under the name of Mrs. Stanley, later under that of Mrs. Hill: she died in 1884, at New Orleans. James William Wallack was the most charming pictorial actor of his time: sovereign

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in romance; his impersonations of *Benedick, Don Cæsar de Bazan,*—of which part he was the English original,—and *Massaroni, the Brigand,* have not, in our time, been equalled. He founded Wallack's Theatre, an institution which lasted sixty-three years, and he was Lester Wallack's father. On the maternal side Lester was descended from the genial, sparkling, dashing Irish comedian John Johnstone (1759-1828), with whose daughter, Susan Johnstone (died, 1851), his father made a runaway match (1817), so that in him histrionic instinct, aptitude, and faculty might well have been expected to flower,—as, in fact, they did. He was born in West Bleecker Street, New York,—as he once mentioned to me,—either just before midnight of December 31, 1819, or just after it, on January 1, 1820; he finally decided on the latter date as that of his birth, for the sentimental reason that January 1 was the birthday of his wife, Emily Millais, sister of the artist John Millais. Wallack was married in 1848. His wife was born in 1825 and, surviving him, died in 1909.

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HIS "EXTRACTED MEMORIES."

No complete and adequate memoir of this extraordinary comedian has been written, and, much though I should like to do so, it is not possible for me to write such a memoir of him now. As long ago as 1875 I planned a Biography of the Wallack Family of Actors, and obtained Lester's authority for its execution, and also the promise of his coöperation in the work. At one time, 1885, having heard that a narrative of his life was to be written by another hand, he wrote to me, saying: "I wish you, and no one *but* you, to deal with the lives and doings of me and mine. No one so fit or able as my old friend and comrade, and no one so acceptable to yours always, Lester Wallack." But journalism, always onerous, to which I was then almost wholly enchained, impeded my labors in other fields, and my purpose of writing that Biography was not fulfilled.

In 1889 appeared a volume entitled "Memories of Fifty Years." It is a sort of Auto-

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biography of Lester Wallack,—if by that name it be correct to designate a desultory, disconnected, rambling, fragmentary descant. The writing of autobiography is, generally, not to be commended. A certain strain of vanity mingles with almost every public form of artistic expression, but, in most cases, it is slight, harmless, and endurable. In the case of the autobiographer it usually is excessive, and the less his life contains that is worthy of record the more strenuously does he insist on recording it. The result is that libraries teem with frivolous chronicles of self-celebrated nobodies. Wallack was not a man of that class. He had lived a life entirely and uncommonly worthy of commemoration, but he never would have made even a slight essay toward a description of it, except at the urgent request of friends. He valued thoughtful and competent appreciation, but he did not entertain an exalted opinion of the average popular intelligence, and, left to himself, he was about the last man in the world who would have thought of accosting that intelligence with a

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narrative of his life and adventures. This compilation of "Memories," extracted from Lester by Laurence Hutton (1843-1904), an able, devoted, and laborious annalist of our Stage, who, with the aid of a stenographer, captured some of the comedian's talk, contains a few interesting facts and considerable anecdote, but it affords nothing more than a fleeting glimpse of the actor.

A WONDERFUL CAREER.

In this chapter I must be content to rehearse the main facts of Wallack's career, and with them to commingle such recollections and impressions of him as a retentive memory can supply. He was christened John Johnstone, after his maternal grandfather: "Lester" was an assumed name. He was taken from New York to London in childhood, and was educated, in England, with a view to employment in the British Army, but in compliance with the earnest wishes of his mother he relinquished the military vocation, and thereafter soon became an actor. His first appearance on the stage,

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aside from his juvenile efforts in private theatricals, was made when he was about 19, in an English provincial town, as an assistant to his father. The first part he played was *Angelo,* in the blank verse drama of "Tortesa, the Usurer," by Nathaniel Parker Willis,—the once widely popular American poet, almost forgotten now. The stage name which he assumed at that time was "Allan Field," and he acted, in association with his father, in a tour of English provincial theatres, appearing not only as *Angelo* but as *Macduff* and *Richmond.* Later he assumed the name of "Mr. John Lester" and, acting in such provincial but by no means uncultured towns as Rochester, Winchester, and Southampton, and in the cities of Liverpool, Manchester, Dublin, Edinburgh, and London, he gained valuable experience. At various times he was professionally associated with actors of signal ability and merited renown,—among them Charles Kemble, Helena Faucit, Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, and Benjamin Webster. In Manchester he played *Benedick,* with Miss Faucit as *Beatrice,* and also he played

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Mercutio, with Charlotte Cushman as *Romeo* and Susan Cushman as *Juliet*: he remembered that Charlotte Cushman said to him, "Young man, there is a great future before you": it could not have been behind. His first appearance in London was made on November 26, 1846, at the Haymarket, where he seems to have been sacrificed by Benjamin Webster, who brought him out in a poor part and finished by casting him for *Dazzle,* which had been played by Charles Mathews, and by forcing him into contrast with such accomplished actors and local favorites as William Farren and J. B. Buckstone. At the Haymarket he was found by George H. Barrett, who engaged him for the Broadway Theatre, New York, and at that house (situated in Broadway, on the east side, near Worth Street, then called Anthony) he appeared, making his first professional venture in America, September 17, 1847, as *Sir Charles Coldstream,* in "Used Up." From that night onward he was identified with the American Stage. After leaving the Broadway he acted successively at the Bowery, Niblo's, Burton's

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(in 1850), and Brougham's Lyceum. Wallack's Theatre, which had been Brougham's, situated in Broadway, near Broome Street, was opened September 8, 1852, with Thomas Morton's comedy of "The Way to Get Married," in which Lester acted *Tangent*. On September 25, 1861, it was instituted at the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirteenth Street, with Tom Taylor's comedy of "The New President," in which he appeared as *De La Rampe*. On January 4, 1882, it was inaugurated at the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street, with "The School for Scandal," in which he did not appear,—contenting himself with the delivery of a speech of welcome. His first appearance on that stage occurred January 3, 1883, when he revived T. W. Robertson's felicitous comedy of "Ours" (originally produced, in America, by Wallack, December 19, 1866), and gave his zestful, piquant, finely finished performance of the half-cynical, blandly humorous, kindly, caustic *Hugh Chalcote*.

Lester managed Wallack's Theatre, continuously, from the time of his father's death (which

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occurred on Christmas, 1864, at his dwelling, No. 210 East Fourteenth Street) till 1887, when it passed into other hands and thereafter its history was much diversified. On October 8, 1888, it was opened, with a performance of "La Joie Fait Peur," by a French company, headed by Constant Coquelin and Jane Hading, as Palmer's Theatre, and it was known by that name until November 30, 1898. On December 8, that year, it was re-opened under its original name,—that great actor, Edward S. Willard, appearing as *Bailey Prothero,* in "The Rogue's Comedy," by Henry Arthur Jones. The last performance ever given in it occurred on Saturday night, May 1, 1915. Later it was demolished.

Prior to 1861 Wallack used the stage name of "Mr. Lester," but when, in that year, the theatre was opened at Thirteenth Street, he acted as Lester Wallack, and ever after he was so designated in the play-bills. Wallack's last appearance on his own stage was made, May 1, 1886, as *De Ligny,* in "The Captain of the Watch." His last appearance as an actor was

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made as *Young Marlowe,* in "She Stoops to Conquer," May 29, 1886, at the Grand Opera House. He was publicly seen for the last time on the occasion of a memorable Testimonial Performance,—of "Hamlet,"—given in his honor and for his benefit by a splendid company of volunteer players, headed by Edwin Booth. In the course of that performance he said Farewell: the last sentence that he ever uttered to an audience was: "With these few words I bid you a respectful good-night, and leave the stage to *Hamlet*—and to you." He died, September 6, 1888, at his home in Stamford, Conn., being in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His grave is in Woodlawn Cemetery.

AUTHOR AS WELL AS ACTOR.

Wallack wrote several plays, all of which were produced,—most of them with success. Those known to me are, "The Three Guardsmen," Bowery Theatre, November 12, 1849; "The Four Musketeers," Bowery Theatre, December 24, 1849; "Fortune of War," Brougham's Lyceum, May 14, 1851; "Two to

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One, or the King's Visit," Wallack's Theatre, December 6, 1854; "First Impressions," Wallack's Theatre, September 17, 1856; "The Veteran, or France and Algeria," Wallack's Theatre, January 17, 1859; "Central Park," Wallack's Theatre, November 12, 1862; and "Rosedale," Wallack's Theatre, September 30, 1863. The first two are based on the fascinating and long famous romances of Alexandre Dumas; Lester acted *D'Artagnan*. In "Two to One" he acted *De Rameau*. There are plays of earlier date than those of Wallack entitled "First Impressions" and "Fortune of War," the former presented at the old Park Theatre, September 28, 1815, the latter at the Anthony Street Theatre, November 18, 1820. I do not know that Lester was indebted to either of them. "Central Park" is, to some extent, a variant of Arthur Murphy's comedy of "All in the Wrong,"—produced June 15, 1761, at Drury Lane Theatre, which had been hired for a summer season by Arthur Murphy and Samuel Foote,—and that play is a variant of Molière's "Cocu Imaginaire." "The Veteran"

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was based on a story called "Frank Hilton, or the Queen's Own," by James Grant. The elder Wallack acted in it, as *Col. Delmar,* the veteran, —the last part he ever studied,—and Lester acted *Leon Delmar,* the veteran's son: a fine and effective combination. John Brougham, in that play gave an exceedingly humorous performance, as *Oflan Agan,* an Irishman who has become a potent Mahometan official. "Rosedale," in which Lester gained great popularity, as *Eliot Grey,* was founded on a novel called "Lady Lee's Widowhood," by Capt. Sir Edward Bruce Hamley (1824-1893), originally published in "Blackwood's Magazine." Captain Hamley served as an officer in the British Army, during the Crimean War, and the novel is said to have been written in the trenches, before Sebastopol.

"ROSEDALE" AND FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN.

The actual authorship of "Rosedale" has been much, and unjustly, questioned. In that elaborate compilation of memoranda, by T. Alston Brown, contributive to a "History of the New

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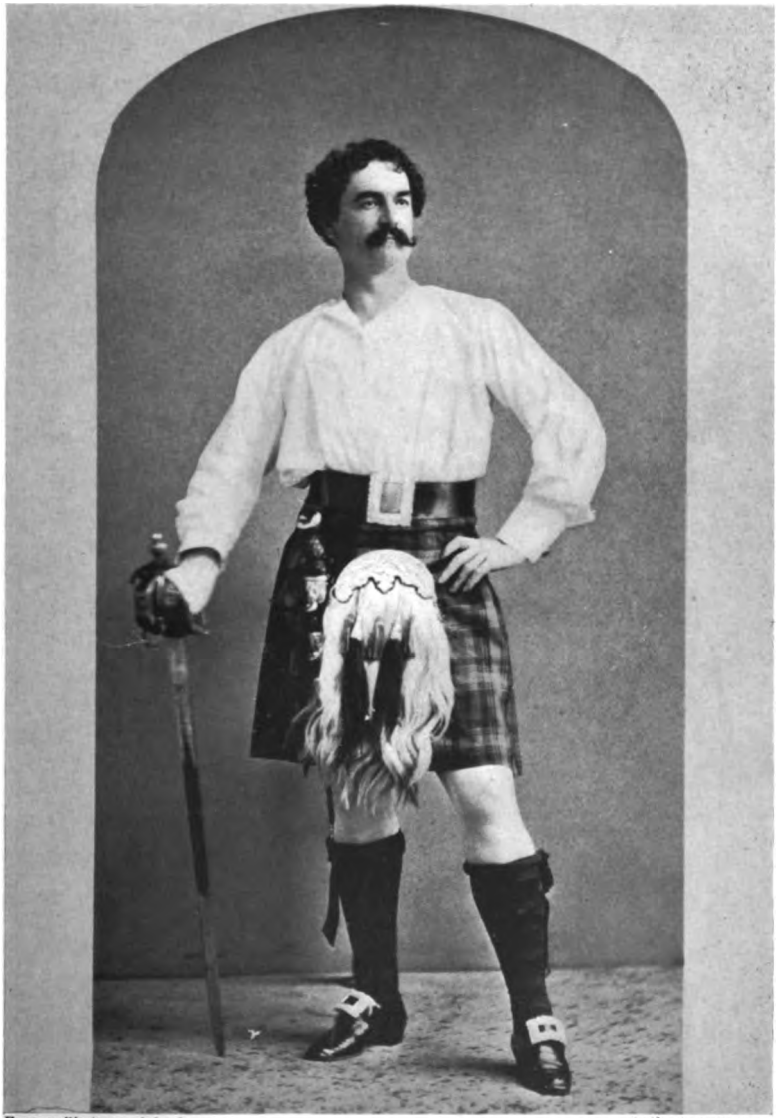

From a Photograph by Sarony *Author's Collection*

LESTER WALLACK

AS *LEON DELMAR*, IN "THE VETERAN"

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York Stage" (1903), Volume II., page 252, the following statement appears:

"The author of 'Rosedale' was not Lester Wallack, as the play-bills always said. At a dinner given in this city in 1890 it was stated by Charles Gayler that Fitz-James O'Brien (who was killed in the War of the Rebellion) was paid $100 by Lester Wallack to write it. For a quarter of a century Lester Wallack was credited with the authorship of that drama. As a matter of fact, neither of these gentlemen wrote it. It is a close dramatization of the novel 'Lady Lee's Widowhood,' which appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine.' Even the names of the characters are retained."

Brown's aspersion of Wallack, which is not warranted, has recently been circulated anew by the esteemed theatrical antiquarian John Bouvé Clapp, of Boston, who,—in an article in "The Transcript" of that city,—ascribed the authorship of the novel on which it is founded to Miss Braddon (Mrs. John Maxwell), and added the erroneous statement that O'Brien left "a volume or two of prose or verse."

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I know nothing about any statement relative to "Rosedale," made by Charles Gayler, at a dinner in New York, in 1890,—two years after the death of Wallack. I knew not only Wallack but Gayler and O'Brien, however, intimately well. I know that Gayler,—an able and genial man, esteemed by many friends, of whom I was one,—was not entirely amicable in his feeling toward Lester Wallack. I was the literary executor of O'Brien,—succeeding Frank Wood and Thomas A. Davis, who had been named by him,—and the only collection of O'Brien's writings, whether prose or verse, is one made by me: it is a volume of 485 pages, containing prose and verse, a sketch of his life, and tributes from some of his friends: the prose part of it has since been published by itself. Among all O'Brien's papers that came into my possession, and in all the inquiries and searches made by me relative to his life and work (and they were diligent and thorough), I never came upon an intimation, or saw or heard even a single word, in any way suggestive of O'Brien's authorship of "Rosedale,"—although I ascer-

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tained his authorship of seven plays, namely, "A Gentleman from Ireland," "The Sisters," "My Christmas Dinner," "Duke Humphrey's Dinner," "The Cup and the Lip," "The Two Ophelias," and "Blood Will Tell." Lester Wallack had a sincere and deep regard for Fitz-James O'Brien, and it was not in his nature to appropriate and publish as his own the work of his dead friend,—or of anybody else. It is *possible,* though *not likely,* that Wallack may have paid O'Brien for doing some slight hack work on an early draft of the play. O'Brien, like myself and others of our early "Bohemian" group of writers, was only too glad to get literary employment of any kind. O'Brien died on April 2, 1862: he was not, as stated by Brown, killed; his death was caused by lockjaw, resulting from a surgical operation, necessitated by a bullet wound in his left shoulder, inflicted February 26,—seven weeks before his death: and, I will add, there is good reason to believe that he would not have died then if the surgical operation had been performed properly in the first place: he died, as

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General Lander and many hundred other wounded men did during the same campaign, from lack of proper treatment. At the time when O'Brien left New York for the front, March, 1861, with the Seventh Regiment, Wallack's Theatre was under the management not of Lester, but of his father, and it is practically certain that if the Wallacks had possessed the play of "Rosedale" early in 1861 they would not have waited till late in 1863 before producing it. Even supposing that O'Brien had done some hack work on an early draft of "Rosedale," that does not constitute authorship; if it did, I could rightly claim to be the author of numerous more or less successful plays which,—generally without receipt of any payment whatever,—I read and more or less cut, altered, revised, and edited. The fact that "Rosedale" is based on "Lady Lee's Widowhood" was pointed out by me, in articles published in 1863 in Wilkes's "The Spirit of the Times" and in "The New York Albion," immediately after its first presentation. The fact that Wallack had no thought of concealing the source of his play

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is shown by his retention in it of the names of the characters in the novel.

SPIRIT OF HIS ART.

The main purpose that Lester Wallack pursued, in his ministry of the art of acting, was the diffusion of innocent pleasure through manifestation of the brighter side of human nature, the nimble, elegant impersonation of mirthful characters, and the portrayal of gay aspects of social life and manners. His range, however, was not constricted. He acted 291 parts, of record,—and the record is incomplete,—and those parts are of many kinds: he was as proficient in *Frankenstein, Monte Cristo, Ulric,* and *Horace de Beauville,* which are melodramatic, as he was in *Courtall, Felix Fetherly, Young Wilding,* and *Rover,* which are mercurial fabrics of light comedy: he even made a creditable appearance in the fur-trimmed raiment and Hessian boots of the melancholy *Stranger:* but the parts he loved to play, and in which he was superb, were those of men who brighten life with their gayety and,—making no parade

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of their virtue,—veil tender feeling and acute sensibility under courtliness of manners and exuberance of glee. Such men are not infrequent in the better creations of Old English Comedy, and, infused with a little not unpleasing cynicism, they often occur in English comedy of later and of contemporary date.

Among the parts that Wallack prized, and in which he was particularly memorable, are *Don Felix,* in "The Wonder"; *Sir Oswin Mortland,* in "To Marry or Not to Marry"; *Harry Dornton,* in "The Road to Ruin"; *Young Marlowe,* in "She Stoops to Conquer"; *De Ligny,* in "The Captain of the Watch"; *Citizen Sangfroid,* in "Delicate Ground"; *Hugh Chalcote,* in "Ours"; *Colonel White,* in "Home," and *Prosper Couramant,* in "A Scrap of Paper." The Shakespearean parts to which he was best fitted were *Benedick, Mercutio, Bassanio,* and *Gratiano.* His *Don Cæsar de Bazan* was the best visible on our Stage during his period. The intrinsic gentleman shone through reckless demeanor, raillery, and tattered apparel. There was a touch

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of pathos in the humorous adroitness with which he converted sentiment into jocularity and made sobriety ludicrous, while by the peculiar felicity of his inflections he gave pointed comic effect to every verbal quip. No actor known to me has surpassed him,—few have equalled him,—in the faculty, which is a rare one, of eliciting and conveying the humorous significance of a word, a broken sentence, or a mere exclamation. His animal spirits, also, in *Don Cæsar*,—and in many other characters,—were singularly infectious.

His treatment of the somewhat inflexible part of *Young Marlowe* provided an instructive and delightful example of the animating quality of his humor and the dexterity of his impersonative art. The text of the dialogue in "She Stoops to Conquer" is often rigidly formal; the colloquies in which *Marlowe* participates are verbally stiff. Wallack made the language dulcet, and he vitalized, with his convincing pretence of absolute sincerity, every situation in which that puzzled youth is placed. Affluent and sustained vitality of spirit is essential to make steadily

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interesting a comedy in which the situations are mostly incredible and some of the incidents farcical. That vitality Wallack supplied. Bluff assurance, airy nonchalance, entirely persuasive and exceedingly comic bashfulness, gallantry, and amiability were the constituents of the impersonation, and the fibre of it was gentility. In character, manners, and costume the person presented as *Marlowe* was a typical young English squire, a knight's son, of Goldsmith's period. He had abundant reason to be proud of that achievement. *Alfred Evelyn,* in "Money," should also be named as another formally written part that he greatly enlivened in his presentment of it, not sacrificing its mordant quality, but suffusing it with latent feeling, and making it sympathetic and lovable.

In reading the novels of Jane Austen I have made pleasing acquaintance with several peculiar men,—drawn with all the sagacity of observation and delicate skill of that wonderfully fine literary artist,—which, had they been in dramatic form, Lester Wallack would have

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made actual and absorbingly interesting. He would also have discriminated with precision between the two brothers named *Moore* who are so well contrasted in Charlotte Brontë's novel of "Shirley." His sense of character was particularly acute. There is a kind of man, indigenous to an old civilization, certainly anomalous in a new one, in whom tender sentiment and the fire of youth are half-extinct, yet existent, smouldering, beneath a half-melancholy, half-bitter aversion to the world. Such a man is portrayed by Mrs. Inchbald, in *Sir Oswin Mortland,* and I remember Wallack's personation of that part as perfect. The theme is the awakening and rejuvenation of a fastidious, almost ascetic recluse, under the influence of an innocent, ingenuous, lovely young woman. Description of the comedian's slow transition from petulant discontent and stern reserve to bewilderment, perplexity, and ultimate sweet surrender could not reproduce the charm of the acting or convey an adequate idea of its blended traits of humor, romance, pathos, and truth. To see and understand Lester Wallack as *Sir*

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Oswin Mortland and as *Don Felix* was completely to comprehend the art of acting comedy.

WALLACK'S LETTERS TO ME.

It was in 1880 that I collected and edited, with a memoir of the author, "The Poems and Stories of Fitz-James O'Brien" (*cir.* 1828-1862), and the volume was published, in Boston, by James R. Osgood & Company, in 1881. O'Brien had been a great favorite with the elder and the younger Wallack, and I sent a copy of the book to Lester, which he acknowledged in the following letter.

"13, West Thirtieth Street,
"March 27, 1881.

"Dear Willy:—

"Knowing my great fondness for O'Brien, it was like your thoughtful kindness to send me the book. You have wrestled with a great difficulty with wonderful tact, and brought order out of 'a mixture of material' which a less delicate and experienced touch might have utterly failed to elicit.

"I tried hard to find a cheery, plucky little note, in pencil, which he wrote to my father after he was

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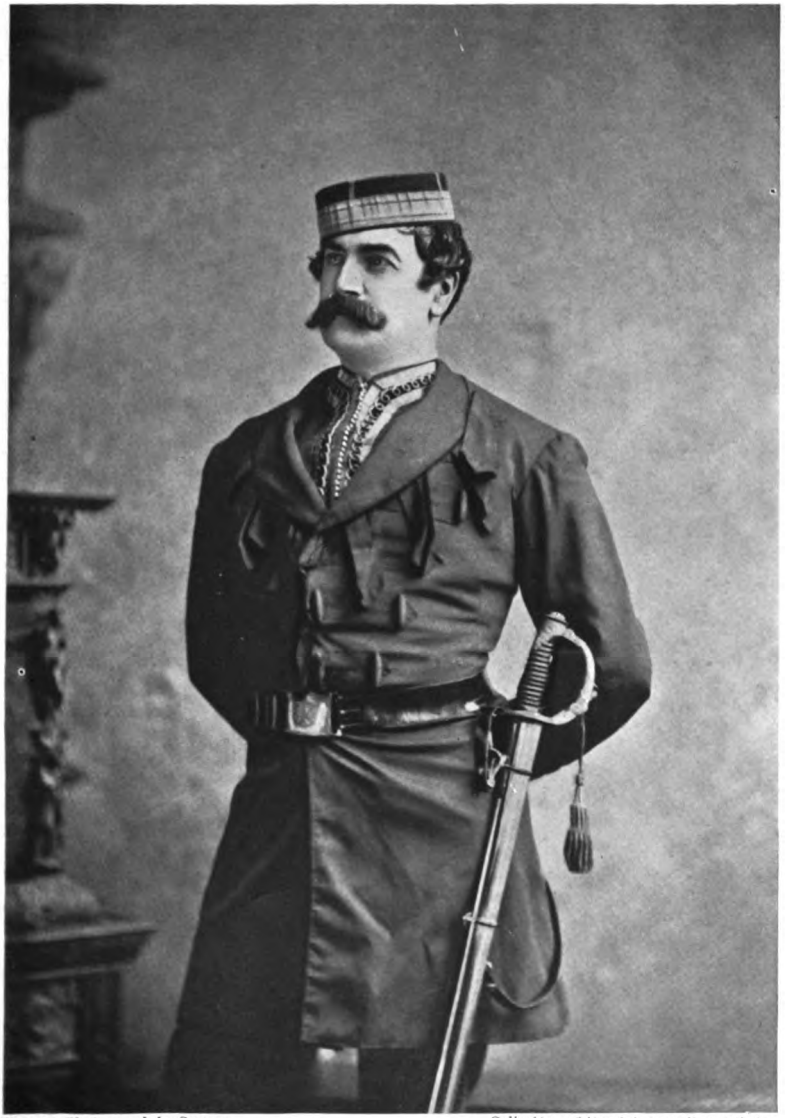

From a Photograph by Sarony *Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

LESTER WALLACK
As *Eliot Grey*, in "Rosedale"

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wounded,—but in vain, or I would have sent it to you.

"Always truly yours,

"LESTER WALLACK.

"P.S. The grammar of this note is questionable, but—never mind. I don't mean O'Brien's note, but mine."

The volume that I sent to Lester was inscribed, as a presentation copy, with our names and the date of the gift,—"March, 1881." Thirty years later, in December, 1911, that volume was found in an old-book shop, in East Fifty-ninth Street, New York, by my son, Jefferson, who bought it and gave it to me. Lester had caused it to be richly bound, but, unhappily, had not written in it. I ascertained that after Lester's death it had, with other property, found its way, as such relics often do, into the limbo of a second-hand-book stall.

Wallack was not, I believe, prone to the writing of letters. Acting and management provided him with engrossing occupation. His letters to me, extending over a period of years,

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were not frequent and usually they were brief, but through them all there is an invariable spirit of kindness, gentleness, and grace. Now, at nearly fourscore, with all the vanities of life behind me, I believe I shall not incur censure by publishing this letter,—a cheering remembrancer that I possessed his esteem and affection, —written to me when I had been almost overwhelmed by sudden and dreadful domestic bereavement:

"Elsmere, Stamford, Conn.,
"July 11, 1886.

"Dear Willy:—

"The despondent tone of your letter grieves me deeply. Do not, my dear old Friend, ignore the fact, amidst all your grief, there still remains the knowledge that you have it in your power to do much good.

"It has been given to you to be, by far, the most able and accomplished supporter and encourager of honest endeavors in art, and this, I think, implies a certain duty, the performance of which,—as it will be *of undoubted good to others*,—should commend itself strongly to your kindly and honest heart, and prove a certain solace to you in your sad affliction.

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"With every affectionate wish for your better health and spirits, I am,

"Always your Friend,

"LESTER WALLACK."

PERSONALITY AND CONVERSATION.

It was one of Lester's foibles,—not unnatural in a light comedian, a performer, to the last, of dashing young men and "beaus,"—that he wished to retain as long as possible the aspect of youth. When his hair began to turn gray he caused it to be dyed, as his romantic contemporary and associate, William Wheatley, had done, and for a long time those representative "admirable Crichtons" of the Stage retained their "raven locks." One morning, at a meeting of the Managers' Association,—a society formed (1868) for the purpose of opposing what managers of theatres deemed injustice in the policy of one of the leading New York daily newspapers,—Wheatley appeared with almost snow-white hair, and, this being noticed, he said, in his frank, genial way, "Yes, it's a great relief,—it's refreshing"; then, addressing Wallack, he

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added, "John, you ought to try it." This "John" subsequently did, and his personal appearance, always fine, was made finer by the change from artificial black to natural gray.

I recall a delightful occasion when Lester Wallack was entertained, December 17, 1887, by the Lotos Club, at a dinner, in the clubhouse, then situated at the northeast corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-first Street. The company was numerous, including many bright spirits since passed away. Whitelaw Reid, then President of the Club, occupied the Chair. On his right sat Lester Wallack, and my seat was next to his. There was, as customary, much speaking, after dinner. I made an address,—which was extemporaneous and is lost,—and delivered a poem that I had written in honor of the comedian, which was received with sympathetic acclamation; because, I suppose, harmonious with the cordial feeling of the company. When I resumed my seat, and while the plaudits of my friendly auditors were ringing through the room, Lester seized my hand and asked me,—with manifestly deep feeling,—

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"Why have you kept your *best* poem for *me?* I don't know what to say," he added: "I can never forget this hour." Then, after a momentary pause, he said: "There is a portrait of me as *Don Felix*. *You* shall have it. You are the one man in the world who *ought* to have it!" I need not say that this kind promise made me glad. I had seen the picture, in his home; I knew its excellence; and I had, and still have, a fondness for theatrical memorials. The speech-making went on. The feast ended. The gay revellers dispersed. The happy meeting soon became only a memory. Lester forgot his generous impulse. The portrait of him as *Don Felix* never came to me. It now hangs in the parlor of The Players,—to which Club, I believe, he bequeathed it,—and there, I hope, it will present, for many generations of actors and of the lovers of the Stage, the speaking image of the most brilliant American comedian of his day.

MY TRIBUTE.

It is not easy for any bard to determine which is his "best" poem. They are all the children

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of his fancy, and, like a fond parent, he loves them all alike—with, possibly, a slight exception in favor of the one that has caused him the most of trouble. It happens that I celebrated in verse, while they were yet living, several comrades of mine distinguished in the dramatic profession,—among them Brougham, Gilbert, Booth, Barrett, Warren, Irving, and Jefferson, —and I remember that each of them expressed to me a decided preference for the lyric personal to himself. Some readers of these pages may like to see the one that Wallack called "the best":

SIR PERCIVAL.

I.

With a glimmer of plumes and a sparkle of lances,
With blare of the trumpet and neigh of the steed,
At morning they rode where the bright river glances
And the sweet summer wind ripples over the mead.
The green sod beneath them was ermined with daisies,
Smiling up to green boughs tossing wild in their glee,
While a thousand glad hearts sang their honors and praises,
Where the knights of the mountain rode down to the sea.

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II.

One rode 'neath the banner whose face was the fairest,
Made royal with deeds that his manhood had done,
And the halo of blessing fell richest and rarest
On his armor that splintered the shafts of the sun.
So moves o'er the waters the cygnet sedately;
So waits the strong eagle to mount on the wing;
Serene and puissant and simple and stately,
So shines among princes the form of the king! . . .

III.

With a gay bugle-note, when the daylight's last glimmer
Smites, crimson and gold, on the snow of his crest,
At evening he rides, through the shades growing dimmer,
While the banners of sunset stream red in the west.
His comrades of morning are scattered and parted—
The clouds hanging low and the winds making moan,—
But, smiling and dauntless and calm and true-hearted,
All proudly he rides down the valley—alone.

IV.

Sweet gales of the woodland, embrace and caress him!
White wings of renown, be his comfort and light!
Pale dews of the star-beam, encompass and bless him
With the peace and the balm and the glory of night!

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And, oh, while he wends to the verge of that ocean
Where the years, like a garland, shall fall from his brow,
May his glad heart exult in the tender devotion—
The love that encircles and hallows him now!

At that Lotos Club dinner, as often, on various other occasions, Lester incidentally said much to me about old times in the Theatre, and about his father and his early associates. He spoke particularly of Charles Melton Walcot, and highly praised that comedian's original view and ingenious and expert treatment of the part of *Major Wellington de Boots,* in "Everybody's Friend" ("The Widow Hunt"). John S. Clarke's performance of that part, he declared, was an imitation of Walcot's,—but this I believe to be an error, because I know that Clarke, in *de Boots,* avowedly and manifestly copied, to a considerable extent, some peculiarities of an excellent friend of his and mine, who is still living. Lester told me that his father was best in *Shylock,*—making him a wronged, abused, suffering man, and thus deeply affecting

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the sympathetic feelings of the audience,—a treatment of the character for which there is no warrant in Shakespeare. "My father," said Lester, "was the first actor who ever wore gray hair, as *Shylock,* and this he did at my earnest request." He spoke of having heard a conversation between his father and Charles Kemble, at the Garrick Club, London, in which they discussed many comedy characters which they both had played, and he said they agreed that the most exacting of them all to act effectively is *Harry Dornton,* in "The Road to Ruin." His own view of that part, I remember, was highly favorable; he specially dwelt on the variety of conditions in it. I had seen his performance of it many times,—at first with Blake, and later with Gilbert as *Old Dornton,*—and could understand his love for it. An equally natural, spirited, brilliant, and touching embodiment of ardent young manhood, inspired by filial affection, has not, in my time, been seen. If Lester Wallack had done nothing else, he would, in that, have proved himself a comedian of the highest order, and a great actor.

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ART IN ACTING COMEDY.

The acting of broad Farce and the acting of Tragedy appear to have been, at all times, more readily and intelligently appreciated by the general public than the acting of Comedy. The expedients of Farce are obvious. Tragedy, appealing to serious sensibility, arouses excessive, sometimes passionate, sympathy, and when such sympathy is predominant intellectual perception is often blinded. The tremendous passion of *Othello* or of *King Lear* so enthralls the popular mind that the manner of its expression (assuming that it be even approximately adequate) is not closely scrutinized,—generally is not considered at all. The Tragedy, therefore, helps the Tragedian, even though he be not possessed of superlative power. The Comedian has no such advantage. He is subjected to cool observation. He must illumine the Comedy. He must excite and charm the fancy, dazzle the mind, and satisfy the perception of character and the sense of humor. "Comedy," said Garrick, "is serious business." No actor

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wins authentic renown in that branch of art,—as Wallack did,—without having richly deserved it. The quality that Lester infused into his acting of Comedy was that delicate, evanescent charm, not readily definable, which may be called romantic, which sometimes,—as in the fragrance of a flower, or the murmur of summer waves upon the beach, or the glint of autumn sunshine on the fading woods,—awakens tremulous sensibility, touches the heart, and, whether gladly or sadly, agitates the mind. His invariable grace, rippling humor, undertone of sentiment, precision of artistic method, exquisite facility of felicitous inflection, intrinsic refinement, and clear, crisp, glittering style of action combined to cause an entirely satisfying effect of absolute completeness in every one of the important fabrics of histrionic art that he displayed. In the realm of light comedy, dealing with things fanciful, romantic, ephemeral, vivacious, half-tangible, and half-elusive,—things that might, perhaps, be symbolized by a butterfly's wing or the sweet odor of a spring breeze,—he was consummate and sovereign. Upon the value of

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those things to the world, or upon the value of the art of the actor who deals with them, opinions will always widely differ, and judgment cautiously hesitates to obtrude a decision. The view of the multitude can be surmised: "Ephraim is wedded to his idols"; solemn persons, furthermore, who consider it essential that they should take always a profoundly serious view of human life, assuring themselves of their firm anchorage on "the Eternal Verities," and concentrating their attention on the Day of Judgment, cannot be expected to care whether *Claude Melnotte* or *Don Cæsar, Alfred Evelyn* or *Robert Macaire,* either are, or ever were, or ever will be, well acted; and often, when writing about actors, I cannot help thinking how utterly insignificant they and all their doings are, and must be, inevitably, to thousands of the human race,—largely to the philosopher, certainly to the sciolist. Nevertheless, musing on Lester Wallack and writing the names of the creatures of fiction whom he caused to live and who remain living in memory because he personified them,—*Charles Surface, Flutter, Mar-*

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plot, Young Wilding, Frederick Bramble, Bob Handy, Harry Jasper, Ruy Gomez, Aranza, Captain Bland, Woodcock, Rover, Young Rapid, Wyndham Otis, Adonis Evergreen, and many more,—the ghosts of happy hours come thronging from the haunted tomb of the Past, and once more there is golden light around me, and the air is redolent of blooming roses and filled with music and gentle laughter, and again, for one delicious moment, I see the faces and hear the voices of friends whom I knew and loved.

AS I REMEMBER.

Neither adversity of fortune nor encroaching age saddened Wallack's interesting personality or marred his fine manner. To the last of suffering and decline he retained the pictorial aspect, delicate distinction, courtly grace, whimsical humor, vivacity, and kindliness which were his intrinsic attributes. He was not a representative practical American of his day. Brilliant as an actor, judicious as a manager, and active and popular as a leader in New

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York society, he nevertheless always seemed to be one of the gay, gallant Englishmen of the Regency,—in which period he was born and reared. His birth in America was adventitious, his parents, foreigners, being here as travellers. His childhood and youth were passed in England and in Ireland, and it was not till his twenty-eighth year that he settled in this country. To me he always seemed a cavalier of the Old World, a gentleman of the old school. There was much in his acting of certain Old Comedy characters,—such as *Valentine,* in "Love for Love," and *Doricourt,* in "The Belle's Stratagem,"—that deepened this impression. As an actor he incarnated buoyancy and elegance, and was the complete exemplification of all that can be accomplished in histrionic art by sensibility and sprightliness of temperament and elasticity and dash of manner. With the vivacious spirit of such parts as I have mentioned, with the diversified essence, also, of such parts as *Mercutio, D'Artagnan, Sir Robert Bramble,* and *Philip Morton,*—volatile, buoyant, expeditionary, passionate, romantic, touch-

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ing, reckless,—the mind and feelings of Wallack were spontaneously sympathetic. Once possessed of them he became identified with them and could not help acting them thoroughly well; and the continuous custom of studying and impersonating types of levity, gallantry, valor, mirth, and sentiment deepened and intensified the innate romantic quality of his nature. Like his famous father, who had captivated an earlier generation with his portrayals of *Richmond, Rolla, Reuben Glenroy, Macgregor, Dick Dashall, Massaroni,* and *Julian St. Pierre,* he could illumine the scene with sumptuous pomp and glittering movement, and, although pathos was not his characteristic vein, I have known him,—as *Manuel,* as *Claude Melnotte,* as *Hugh Trevor,* and even as *Alfred Evelyn* (designated by Macready as "that damned walking-gentleman!"),—to touch the source of tears. Such an individuality, richly endowed by nature and largely favored by circumstance, could not, and did not, fail to crystallize around itself much interesting experience. If, before his vigor had slackened and his enthusiasm had

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become somewhat cooled by perception that the new age was pushing him aside, Lester Wallack had thoughtfully written the story of his career, it would have been a vital and sparkling narrative, because it would have described the progress of the histrionic art and the development of the Theatre throughout half a century of interesting vicissitude, and it would have enshrined the living images of many beautiful and brilliant women and rare and fascinating men who were his contemporaries and friends. No pen can do for him now,—certainly mine cannot,—what once he, and only he, could have done for himself. But as now I think of him, in musing on departed, distant days of strength and hope and cheer, he comes vividly upon my remembrance, one of the most vital, lifelike, splendid figures of all the storied past that I have known; and I seem to see once more that brilliant, manly presence,—the erect, trim person; the graceful bearing; the elastic step; the symmetrical, compact head; the close-curling, gray hair; the heavy, almost "military," moustache; the clear-cut, aquiline, aristocratic feat-

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ures; the handsome, piercing, dark eyes; the heavy, arched eyebrows; the fine complexion, naturally pale but sometimes bronzed by wind and sun; the kindling smile;—and I hear the ringing laugh and the clear, silvery tones, and so I call back in fancy, from Memory's silent land, what, alas, can never be again,—

"The touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

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IV.

BOON COMPANIONS:

JAMES W. WALLACK, THE YOUNGER; MARK SMITH; EDWIN ADAMS; H. J. MONTAGUE.

I.—JAMES W. WALLACK, THE YOUNGER, 1818—1873.

More than the period of one generation has passed since the death of "Jim" Wallack (so he was affectionately called), and I suppose that few persons are now living who intimately knew him in the days of his success and renown. Those who did know him remember him as an original and exceedingly interesting character, and, in his profession, as essentially a poetic actor. Imagination was one of the strongest of his mental faculties, and often he seemed to be dwelling in a land of dreams. I have seen him walking in a crowded street, so preoccupied with his thoughts that, evidently,

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he was unconscious of the persons passing to and fro around him. In acting he was often splendidly energetic, as when he impersonated the impetuous *King James,* in "The King of the Commons," making actual a noble ideal of manhood and thrilling his audience with excitement, but in the social intercourse of private life the influence that he diffused was restful. There was no artifice in his mind and no affectation in his manner. He was kind and patient, sometimes a little sad, always gentle; and so he made life sweeter to those around him, mitigating its labors and dignifying its objects. In racial characteristics he somewhat resembled his cousin Lester, yet in mentality, temperament, and artistic style the two men were widely dissimilar. Lester was sanguine; James was sedate. Lester specially excelled in comedy; James, in tragedy and melodrama. Both were of fine presence, but James was the larger and, being somewhat slower in movement and slightly rugged, he was, personally, more impressive. His uncle (after whom he was named) often affectionately called him "my old

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Newfoundland." The designation was apt and it is strongly suggestive now of what he was. He seemed the literal embodiment of benevolent strength, fidelity, and good nature. He had humor, but it was wistful and quaint, though when he wished to do so he could make it sardonic and grim,—but that was in acting. Himself one of the most amiable of men, he could, as an actor, express in perfection the dark passions of avarice, remorse, terror, and despair. The Stage has had few such actors as he was, fewer still of such men, to manifest its power and wear the laurels of its fair renown.

James William Wallack was the only son of Henry John Wallack, was born in London, February 24, 1818, and was early brought to America. In 1822, at the old Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, he was carried on the stage, as *Cora's Child,* in the play of "Pizarro" (a classic medium for infantine first appearances), and his histrionic career can be said to have thus begun. His boyhood was passed in the atmosphere of the footlights, and his train-

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ing was exclusively and continuously theatrical. He appears to have been thoughtful and reserved in youth, somewhat slow to learn, patient, modest, and industrious. His first professional experience was obtained at the Bowery Theatre, which, in his time, was an institution of high rank. Later he joined the company at the National Theatre, managed (from September 4, 1837, till September 23, 1839) by his uncle, the elder Wallack,—with whom his namesake was always a favorite. At the National he began to attract special notice, but his rise to prominence was gradual and it was accomplished by study and labor, not by sudden irradiance of genius. He made a fortunate marriage, 1841, wedding the widow of William Sefton (Ann Waring, daughter of the comedian Leigh Waring and his wife, Caroline Placide), and to that excellent woman and fine actress his happiness and much of his professional success were due,—because she cheered and aided him in all his high ambitions and endeavors, and supplied the prudence which he lacked in the conduct of practical affairs.

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Together they made tours of the country, acting in a varied repertory, which included "Macbeth," "King Lear," "Hamlet," "King Richard III.," "The Merchant of Venice," "Werner," "The Honeymoon," "Love's Sacrifice," "The Hunchback," "Money," and "The King of the Commons," and they gained ample popularity. They also visited Australia. In 1851 they were in London, and Wallack appeared at the Haymarket Theatre, as *Othello*. About that time, for a little while, he managed the Marylebone Theatre, and he acted, with an English company, in Paris.

In 1855 Wallack had returned to America, and thereafter for twenty years he was conspicuous among the most admirable actors on the American Stage. In 1861, as a member of "The Wallack-Davenport Combination," he gained great favor by his superb acting of *Cassius,* in "Julius Cæsar"; *Fagin,* in "Oliver Twist," and *Leon de Bourbon,* in "The Man in the Iron Mask,"—personations strikingly contrasted and variously exhibitive of truthful characterization, massive power, and overwhelm-

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ing pathos. His intimate friend Edward L. Davenport divided honors with him in the representations in which they participated. Rose Eytinge,—talented, handsome, and of an exceedingly formidable character,—was the leading woman of the company. In 1865-'66 he acted in New York, at Wallack's Theatre, and made a signal impression as *Henry Dunbar,* in the grim, gloomy, but effective, drama bearing that name,—based on the novel by Miss Braddon. In 1870 he was associated with the Globe Theatre, Boston, then under the capricious management of Charles Fechter, who behaved toward him in an arrogant and insolent manner, causing him to repudiate all association with that fractious person. Wallack was a more intellectual, massive, powerful, better, and more important actor than Fechter and therefore obnoxious to him. On August 19, 1872, acting at Booth's Theatre, he played *Mathias,* in "The Bells," and impressively exhibited the afflicting struggle to control anguish and terror in a haunted mind. Later, at the same theatre, he acted *Mercutio* and also

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Jaques, in association with Adelaide Neilson as *Juliet* and as *Rosalind,* and he presented *Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury,* in John Brougham's historical drama of "The Lily of France" —one of the many plays relative to Joan of Arc which have failed. His last appearance was made as *Henry Dunbar,* in Christmas week, 1872, when it became evident that his health was broken and his power failing. His few remaining days were passed in the mild climate of South Carolina. He seemed to improve while there, and he was encouraged to attempt the journey from Aiken to his home in Long Branch; but his strength failed and he died, suddenly, May 24, 1873, in a railway sleeping car, a short time before the train reached Richmond, Virginia. His funeral occurred on May 27, a day of uncommon beauty, at the Church of the Transfiguration, in New York, and it was attended by an unusual assemblage of worth, talent, and renown. His grave is in Greenwood.

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A SERENE TEMPERAMENT.

An amusing incident, illustrative of Wallack's good-nature and equanimity, occurred at Long Branch. Wallack was driving with "Tom" Placide, well known and much liked as an eccentric actor, and specially interesting to his friends by reason of the oddities of his character, blunt candor, kind heart, explosive temper, and boisterous speech and manner. He was a Southerner, and passionately sympathetic with the people of the Southern States in the time of the Civil War. Wallack, on the contrary, was, in his quiet way, stanch for the Union. In the course of the drive, on a lovely summer morning, their talk was of this subject, and Wallack mildly expressed his satisfaction at the triumph of the Union cause. Placide became enraged and vituperative. "James Wallack," he presently exclaimed, "stop this horse." Wallack immediately obeyed, and Placide descended, in fierce excitement, and knelt upon the ground. Then, raising his arms as if to invoke the heavenly powers, he ejaculated

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a prolix curse upon the Pilgrim Fathers, the signers of the death-warrant of King Charles the First (always pet objects of his detestation), the whole Wallack Family, James Wallack in particular, and, all and singular, the oppressors of the human race. "Well, Uncle Tom," said Wallack, when he ceased, "have you finished?" "Yes, I have," answered Placide. "Then jump in," replied Wallack, "and we'll drive on." Thus perfect harmony was restored. I can, in fancy, see Wallack's smile, as he started the horse, after that comic ebullition of innocuous rage from a man who would scarcely have wished to harm a fly. I knew "Tom" Placide well; at one time I lodged in the same house with him; and occasionally we sat up together till nearly morning, in friendly conversation. Among the decorations on the wall of his sitting-room there was a framed print of the death-warrant of King Charles, and well I remember how indignantly he would point at it, with the stem of his pipe, and how irascibly he would inveigh against the "infernal regicides." Poor old Tom! He was a good fellow,

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if ever there was one. He could act low comedy parts very well. His eccentric ways were legion. He possessed, among other accomplishments, the unusual one of being able to shave his face without the use of a mirror. He would walk about the room, performing that operation with surprising celerity, only pausing now and then to talk, and never inflicting on himself even a scratch. It was an amusing spectacle. He married, late in life, and established his home at a place in New Jersey called Tom's River, where, after some time, finding himself afflicted with the incurable disease of cancer, he committed suicide, by shooting himself with a rifle.

COMRADE AND FRIEND.

In an old diary of mine I lately found this entry: "February 24, 1870. Drank with Jim Wallack, in honor of his birthday. He said he was fifty-two and that Lester was one year younger" [an error: Lester was almost two years younger]. We had chanced to meet, near Wallack's Theatre, and to meet "Jim" Wal-

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lack was to be conscious of a convivial impulse. He was not a roisterer; he was one of the most tranquil of men; but he was essentially companionable, and whenever we met it was as comrades. It is hard, even now, to believe that he is dead; that I shall never see again the twinkle of quiet mirth in those kind eyes; that the strong hand will not ever give the grasp of friendship nor the breezy laugh ever gladden again. The last time I saw him he said Good-by to me, at the gate of his garden in Long Branch, and as I think of him now the ocean murmurs on the beach and a sweet summer wind whispers in the branches of old trees, and once more I am aware of a gracious presence that is full of kindness and peace.

II.—MARK SMITH, 1829—1884.

Mark Smith, a man of extraordinary talent, was for more than twenty years an intimate associate of mine, and as I think of him I recall many lovely traits of his character and many beauties of his acting. His life was not eventful; in fact, was somewhat barren of incident.

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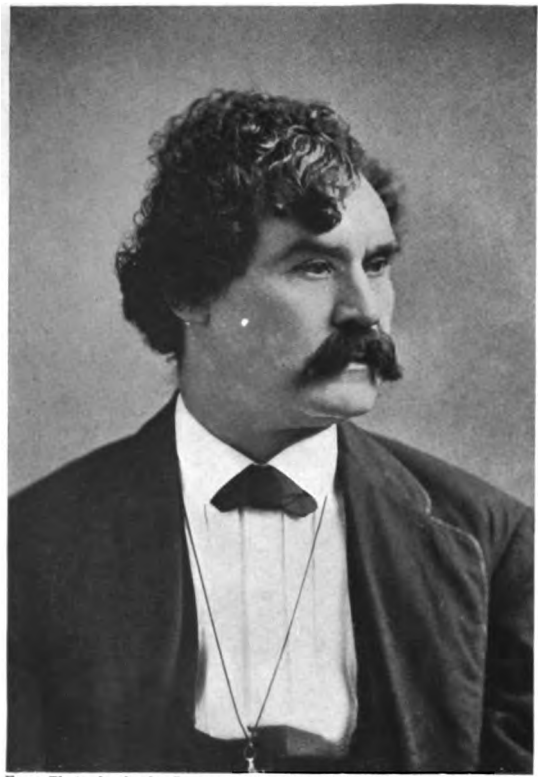

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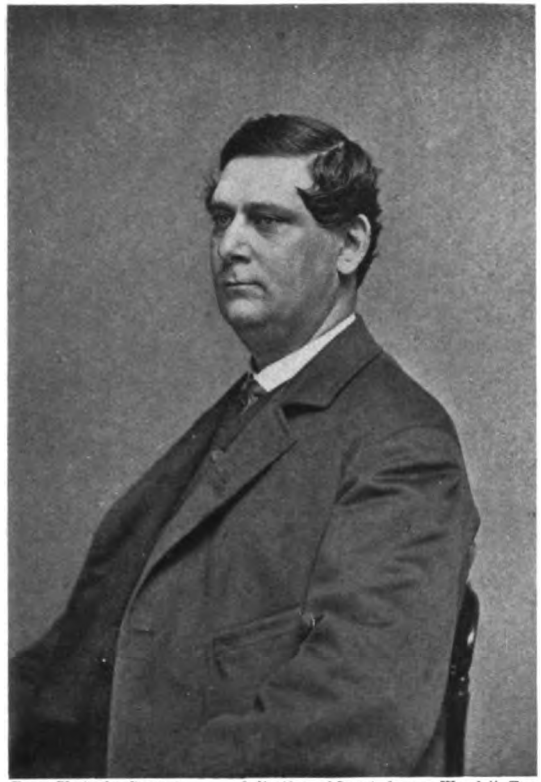
JAMES W. WALLACK, THE YOUNGER



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MARK SMITH

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He was one of the sons of that eccentric old actor and manager, Sol Smith (1801-1869), so prominent in the early days of the American Theatre in the West and South, and was born in New Orleans, January 27, 1829. In boyhood he played juvenile parts at his father's theatre, but he did not formally adopt the Stage as a profession till he was twenty years old. In the meantime he had, for a while, been a sailor. His first regular and considerable appearance was made, November 11, 1849, at the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, as *Diggory,* in "Family Jars." The choice of that part was judicious. "Family Jars" is farcical, yet it is a little more than a farce. The plot is ingenious, the situations are comic, the parts are good, and, though the thing is a slender fabric of mirth, there is a touch of feeling in it, for which reason, perhaps, it long kept a place on the Stage. I remember little Lotta in it, at Wallack's Theatre, about forty-seven years ago. It was first produced, August 26, 1822, at the Haymarket Theatre, London, with Liston, Terry, and Oxberry in the cast, and

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on October 14, 1824, it was presented at the old Park Theatre, New York, with a cast comprising Barnes, Placide, Richings, and Mrs. Wheatley,—names of much significance to readers acquainted with our Stage History. Burton, Nickinson, and Warren have acted in it. Mark Smith, as *Diggory,* was successful, and thereafter he steadily pursued a prosperous professional course, soon making his way to the New York Stage, on which he first appeared in 1851, and on which he was a favorite to the end of his days. He did not, however, continuously act in the capital. More or less he was a rover, filling star engagements in the country. In the summer of 1868, in association with Daniel E. Setchell, Emily Thorne, and others, he appeared at the Winter Garden, New York, acting in burlesque, in which he was expert and exceedingly funny: one of his best burlesque parts was Brougham's *Powhatan.* He could sing, and his vocalism, whether serious or comic, was excellent. In 1866 he participated with John Lewis Baker, another old favorite (he died in 1873), in the management of the little theatre

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in Broadway then called the New York. In 1869 he joined the capital company with which Edwin Booth opened Booth's Theatre, and he participated, as *Friar Lawrence,* in "Romeo and Juliet," in the first performance given on Booth's magnificent stage. Later, in the season of 1869-'70, he acted in association with Mrs. John Wood, at the St. James's Theatre, London. He was taken ill while travelling and he fell, insensible, on the platform of the railway station, at Charing Cross, on arriving from Paris; when he recovered consciousness he said, in apparent wonderment and quite blithely, "Why, what's the matter? *I* am never sick." He was taken to a hospital, where he expired. His funeral occurred at "the Little Church Around the Corner," and he was buried, beside his father, in Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Mark Smith was a man of unique personality, strongly individual character, and ample intellectual endowment and resource. He had developed slowly. He had continuously risen,

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and was fitted and seemed destined still to rise in a sure, cumulative, artistic growth. He was a diligent student, largely of literature but more of human nature and passing events. He possessed by inheritance the instinct and faculty of the actor, and also he possessed in a considerable degree the faculty of the writer. An atmosphere of art surrounded him as naturally as foliage invests a tree. No person could be even casually in his society without perceiving his love for art and letters, his quick and deep appreciation of the beauty and significance of artistic forms, his ample knowledge, his keen intuitions as to character, and his spontaneous, eager delight in all things that enrich and dignify human life. In conduct, whether personal or professional, he evinced the prime virtue of integrity. He aimed high, and he was content with nothing less than superlative excellence. The influence that radiated from his character not only charmed but ennobled those by whom it was felt, because it exerted the magnetic, sympathetic force of a thoroughly honest nature, good, simple, tender, benevolent, and

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neither pragmatic nor austere. Smith was not that kind of worthy person who makes goodness insipid. In him the everyday attributes of right speaking and right conduct became engaging, and his comrades and acquaintances not only rested on his probity but found continual pleasure and comfort in his companionship or his presence. Spectators of his acting were, in an equal degree, affected by this influence. The attribute of winning goodness that endeared him in private life was the attribute that shone through his acting and endeared him on the stage. He was the *Cheeryble Brothers* in one, and that one possessed of fine intellect and polished taste as well as loving and profuse benignity. Whenever he was on the scene, whether as *Squire Broadlands,* or *Mr. April,* or *Mr. Harmony,* or *Col. Damas,* or any other of the intrinsically genial persons he portrayed, the observer of him felt that every trait of manliness, kindly mirth, gracious serenity, and human feeling that warmed and beautified the fictitious character had its native source in the heart of the man himself. That way the magnetism of his per-

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sonality operated, and the affectionate interest which he thus captivated his signal impersonative talent never failed to reward.

SCOPE OF HIS ART.

The wide scope of his histrionic ability was apparent in the variety of the parts in which he was exceptionally competent. Tragedy he did not attempt. Among his Shakespearean characters were *Polonius, Dogberry, Kent, Autolycus, Casca, Shallow, Adam, Bardolph, Brabantio, Verges, King Duncan, Sir Toby Belch, Friar Lawrence, Dromio,* the *Duke of Venice,* and *Hecate.* His miscellaneous repertory included, among many other parts, *Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Oliver Surface, Sir Robert Bramble, Sir John Vesey, Old Rapid, Lord Duberley, Lord Plantagenet, Hardcastle, Bob Tyke, Ironsides, Solomon, Haversac,* and *Mr. Stout.* One of his most characteristic and delightful personations was that of *Doctor Desmerets,* in "The Romance of a Poor Young Man," and his humorous sapience was charmingly evinced when he acted *De Blossière,* in the comedy of

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"Henriette,"—better known of late years as "A Scrap of Paper." One of the most complete achievements in the art of acting that have adorned the Stage in our time was his performance of the vain, amorous, rickety, polished old coxcomb, *Sir William Fondlove,*—in which part he made his first appearance at Wallack's Theatre, May 17, 1862, on a bright occasion when Lester Wallack revived "The Love Chase," himself conspicuously elevating the flimsy character of *Wildrake,* Mrs. Hoey brightly playing *Constance,* and Marie Wilkins, one of the cleverest, most versatile, and most amusing "old women" ever seen on our Stage, making a memorable hit as the *Widow Green.* That single performance may be said to have fixed Smith's reputation. I seem to hear, even now, the overwhelming applause that attended and followed the scene of *Sir William's* courtship of the *Widow.* Another perfect embodiment of his, a sketch but in its way a gem of art, was that of the elegant, superbly audacious swindler who opens the Third Act of Planché's "Knights of the Round Table," which I saw

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at Wallack's Theatre, as long ago as June, 1863, and could never forget.

The defects in Smith's acting resulted from his intense purpose and scrupulous care to be, first of all, correct. He was not pedantic, but he was formal, and sometimes he was so inflexible as to be hard and dry. This formalism he had, in great measure, overcome when, at the Union Square Theatre, he acted *Jacques Fauvel,* in a drama called "One Hundred Years Old," adapted by Hart Jackson from a French original. The impersonation was stately and venerable, but also it was gracious and tender, and those observers who saw it and had studied the actor clearly saw how considerably the hardness of his earlier style had been ameliorated and how mature he had become in comprehension and control of the elemental feelings of human nature and in the wisdom that is born of experience. The serious side of his mind was, perhaps, more conspicuously exhibited in that performance than it had been in any other. Whether grave or gay he was a vivid impersonator, and his fidelity to nature,

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not photographic but artistic, was as absolute as intellectual purpose could make it. He was a rosy, jovial, yet always delicate, humorist. He was naturally dignified. He respected all that was good in old stage traditions and models, but he looked at things with his own eyes, he thought for himself, and he struck out a pathway of his own. His capability of sympathy was quick and it was comprehensive. He possessed keen, intuitive perception of the essence and the complexity of a character, and, as his performance of *Squire Broadlands*, alone, was sufficient to prove, he also possessed the art to make them manifest and effective. That simple, genial, stubborn, eccentric, bluff, peremptory, hospitable English gentleman has had no such representative since Smith died. His imagination delighted in thoughts of good cheer, acts of kindness, and scenes of enjoyment. The prattle of happy children and the soft laughter of young lovers sounded in his mind and gladdened it. He was at home on the green lawn of the ancient manor-house, under the immemorial elms, crowning the feast with welcome, amid the

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blessings of music and sunshine and fragrant summer wind, with, over all, a tranquil air of restful antiquity and gentle romance. If any actor known to his generation could have put *Sir Roger de Coverley* on the stage, and made him as fine and lovable there as he is in the pages of Addison, Smith was the actor to have done it. Goldsmith's *Dr. Primrose* and the *Village Preacher* lived again in him, with other manners, indeed, and wearing other garb, but the same in soul. His quality as an actor can be inferred from those facts. He belonged to the school of actors that King and Farren, in England; Got, in France, and Placide, Blake, Gilbert, and Warren, in America, exemplified so well. He did not possess as juicy humor as Blake did, nor was he as droll, but in serious moments he equalled him, and in severely artistic form and finish he sometimes surpassed him. Blake was the better *Jesse Rural* and Gilbert was the better *Mr. Dornton;* but in many ways he rivalled them, and to do that was indeed to stand in the front rank. I suppose that his name is almost unknown to the present genera-

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tion, but in my memory it is written in letters of gold.

III.—EDWIN ADAMS, 1834—1877.

The acting of Edwin Adams was always interesting, often delightful, sometimes superb, but the few persons who now remember him probably think of the man more than they do of the actor. To know him was to love him. A man more brave, gentle, and tender, more joyous, more healthful in nature, more winning in the peculiarities of his personality, has not been known to me. In his appearance and demeanor there was a strong, calm, sweet manliness, a careless, happy frankness, a natural kindness, which attracted every eye and captured every heart. Adams looked like the handsome, dashing sailor-lad of Romance, and perfectly filled the ideal, at once poetic and popular, of the gay, audacious, always successful, hero of breezy adventure.

No man makes a considerable impression on his contemporaries unless possessed of originality of mind and strength of character as well

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as sweetness of temperament. Adams not only diffused a charm but exerted a force in the dramatic life of his period. He possessed creative emotional power as an actor, and he used that power effectively in some of the tragedies of Shakespeare, in Old English Comedy, and in Romantic Drama. His repertory included *Mercutio* and *Iago, Rover* and *Romeo, Charles Surface* and *Sir Thomas Clifford, Edward Middleton* and the *Stranger,* and *Robert Landry* and *Enoch Arden.* He was not equally excellent in all lines, but in all he was efficient. Next to E. L. Davenport, he was the best *Mercutio* I have ever seen. He was not, intrinsically, a tragedian: his natural field was that of the genial emotions. He was not an analyst of motives, not skilled in dissecting character, not a zealous student, not expert in the mosaic of detail. His method was careless, but spontaneously he was dramatic, and if he did not often excite the intellect he always touched the heart. He was not a fastidious artist, but he went right because his dramatic instinct would not permit him to go wrong. His impersona-

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tions were supremely vitalized, so that they thrilled the feelings and fired the imagination. His voice, rich, soulful, lovely,—before it became impaired by hard use and illness,—was one of the most melodious and sympathetic ever heard, and to hear it was,—certainly for the discriminative listener,—to feel the authentic charm of genius.

BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS.

Adams was born in Medford, Massachusetts, February 3, 1834, and was reared and educated under the strict New England influences then notably prevalent. The Theatre, in his youthful days, in that region, was not viewed with an entirely auspicious eye. He insisted, however, on adopting the profession of the Stage, and on August 29, 1853, made his first appearance, at the old National Theatre, in Haymarket Square, Boston, playing the minor part of *Stephen,* in "The Hunchback." His early efforts were creditable, but his advancement was slow. In the autumn of 1854 he appeared at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, as

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Charles Woodley, in "The Soldier's Daughter," and in that city and later in Baltimore and other Southern capitals he met with marked favor. One of his early admirers was Henry E. Abbey, in after years one of the most prominent of American speculative theatrical managers, and I believe it was under Abbey's agency that, about 1860, he played a highly successful engagement in Buffalo, presenting *Hamlet* and several other of the great standard parts. In 1863 he was leading man in H. L. Bateman's company, acting *Rudolph,* in "Leah the Forsaken," then presented for the first time in New York,—Kate Bateman playing *Leah;* J. W. Wallack was the apostate Jew, *Nathan,* and the talented and handsome Henrietta Chanfrau, then in her prime, was *Madeline.* Under Bateman's management he remained for a considerable time, but eventually he won his place among the stars, and that place he held almost continuously till the end of his career. In 1866, at the Broadway Theatre, New York (the house which had been Wallack's, in 1852), he was seen as *Robert Landry,* in "The Dead

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Heart," a character of which he was the first, and best, representative on our Stage; *Adrian de Teligny,* in Robert T. Conrad's drama of "The Heretic"; *Romeo,* and *Rover.*

On the opening night of Booth's Theatre (February 3, 1869), Edwin Booth playing *Romeo,* Adams personated *Mercutio,* and gave a sparkling and touching performance. Later he enacted *Narcisse, Iago, Raphael,* and *Claude Melnotte.* At Booth's Theatre, on June 21, 1869, he appeared as *Enoch Arden,* in a drama based on Tennyson's poem, and with that part, in which his success was great, his name remained continuously identified. He acted it throughout the United States and (1876) in Australia. While in that country his health gave way and at one time his death was reported. He returned, however, to San Francisco, and there, being completely broken down and impoverished, he made his last appearance on the stage, February 12, 1877, at the California Theatre, where a performance occurred, for his benefit, under the direction of his constant and beloved friend John McCullough.

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He did not act, because unable to do so, but only occupied, for a few moments, a chair on the stage, while his comrades, gathered around him, sang "Auld Lang Syne." On October 12, 1877, performances for his benefit were given in New York, at the Academy of Music,—the movement to that end having been effected largely by my labor, in association with Edward A. Sothern. In the meantime, lingering in great distress, he had made the journey to Philadelphia, where I saw him, on his death-bed, and we exchanged farewells. He died, October 28, 1877, in the forty-fourth year of his age, and was buried in the Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Adams was a conspicuous example of genius that was not pretentious, amiability that was not insipid, virtue that was neither complacent nor dull. Nature, making him good and gentle, also invested him with alluring charm. Children sported, with love and pleasure, in his presence. Heroic ideals were made actual by his art. He was one of those rare men who refresh mankind by spontaneous, shining exposition of the loveliness which is an inherent element of

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human nature. His death was the extinction of a light that cheered, a beauty that fascinated, a goodness that strengthened and encouraged all who came within the scope of his influence. As I think of him I remember the lovely words of the poet Milnes:

> "He made a heaven about him here,
> And took, how much! with him away!"

IV.—HENRY J. MONTAGUE, 1844—1878.

Among the younger comedians who flourished under Lester Wallack's management of Wallack's Theatre, about forty years ago, there was one who gained uncommon public favor and specially endeared himself to members of his profession. I knew him well, and I remember him as an exceptionally representative histrionic type,—the refined, polished gentleman of polite society. His stage name was Henry J. Montague. His family name was Mann. He was born and reared in London. He began industrial life as a clerk, but soon gravitated to the Stage. Dion Boucicault gave him a

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professional opening, January 26, 1863, at the Westminster Theatre, London, as the *Junior Counsel,* in the Trial Scene of "The Heart of Midlothian," and in the course of the next ten years he acted in several theatres and in many plays, and made his way to general public acceptance. At one time he was associated with David James and Thomas Thorne in the management of the London Vaudeville Theatre. In 1874 he joined Wallack's company in New York, and there he soon gained a reputation for professional ability, as well as intrinsic worth, such as he had not acquired in England. He was an amiable, gracious, gentle person, genial in temperament, graceful in manners, considerate of others, and temperate and charitable in speech. He endeared himself by what he was more than by what he did: and this, since character is more important than talent and living more important than acting, is a high kind of success. In what Montague did, however, there was a peculiar and substantial merit.

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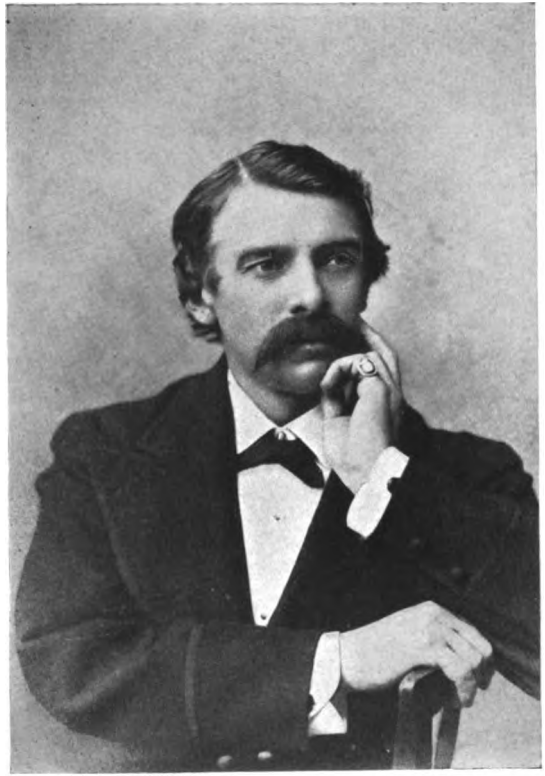

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EDWIN ADAMS

From a Photograph by Mora *Author's Collection*

H. J. MONTAGUE
AS *CAPT. MOLINEUX*, IN "THE SHAUGHRAUN"

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A PRODUCT OF HIS TIME.

The condition of the Stage is sometimes a consequence of the actors who are upon it, but sometimes the actors who are upon it are a consequence of its condition,—remotely, of course, of the forces by which it is controlled. Montague was an actor of the latter class. He was not a leader: he could never have established a tradition: but he reflected perfectly a popular spirit of his day,—a spirit actively sympathetic with the lambent satire of T. W. Robertson, the piquant drollery of H. J. Byron, and the half-playful, half-bitter cynicism of W. S. Gilbert. Those were frequent characteristics of English plays about the mid-Victorian period, and in those plays Montague was well fitted. His manner was elegant. He possessed repose, sentiment, a kind of wistful aspect, sensibility, a certain sapient drollery, and a telling quality of demure banter. He lacked intensity. He would have been finical in such a part as *Raphael,* in "The Marble Heart," and paltry in such parts as are typified by Shakespeare's

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Gratiano. His limitations were stringent, and they were obvious. He was restricted to the comedy of everyday life, in good society. His talents were not versatile, nor was his acting marked by any of those striking features which it is usual to designate as character. He used water colors, and his touch,—light, easy, and delicate,—was always the same. In the latter part of his life he endured severe professional tests, side by side with the foremost and finest light comedian of his generation, Lester Wallack, and he acted thoroughly,—showing dignity, modesty, taste, and grace.

If partial friendship over-estimated his talents or envy misrepresented the nature of his success, or detraction vilified his attitude toward his art, that was only "the rough brake that virtue must go through." He was exceptionally free from the vanity that characterizes most actors. He carried to the Stage the feelings and manners of a gentleman and he carried to society the poetry and romance of the Stage. He was earnest and frank, unostentatious, sometimes sweetly grave, sometimes quietly

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gay, always companionable. His artistic labor, if his life had been prolonged, could not have failed to win for him a high rank as a romantic actor. He was steadily gaining in power. He died while yet his honors were unripe and the promise of his young manhood was unfilled. His death occurred, August 11, 1878, in San Francisco, where he had been acting in a company on tour. His grave is in the Wallack plot, in Greenwood. It has been my fortune to know, in good-fellowship, many of the actors who have passed across the American Stage within the last sixty years,—many bright spirits who have gladdened life for a while and then vanished into the great darkness that awaits us all. With their gracious names I write the name of Harry Montague. In life he deserved affection, and his memory deserves honor. He was one of the gentlest beings I have known, and so, in the apt words of Sir Walter,

"I bring my tribute to his grave:
'Tis little—but 'tis all I have."

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V.

EDWIN BOOTH.

1833—1893.

"He has shook hands with Time; his funeral urn
Shall be my charge."

THERE was a great shower of meteors on the night of November 13, 1833, and on that night, at Belair, near Baltimore, Maryland, was born the most famous tragic actor of America, Edwin Booth. No other American actor had a rise so rapid or a career so early and continuously brilliant as that of Edwin Booth. His father, the renowned Junius Brutus Booth, had wreathed the family name with distinction and romantic interest. If ever there was a genius on the stage it was the elder Booth. His wonderful eyes, tremendous vitality, electrical action, power to thrill the feelings and easily and inevitably to awaken pity and terror,—all

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these made him a unique being and obtained for him a reputation with old-time audiences distinct from that of all other men. He was followed as a marvel, and for many years, among those who remembered him, mention of his name stirred an enthusiasm such as no other theatrical memory could awaken. His sudden death, alone, on board a Mississippi River steamboat, November 30, 1852, was pathetic, and the public thought concerning him thenceforward commingled tenderness with fervent admiration. When his son Edwin began to rise as an actor the people everywhere rejoiced and gave him an eager welcome. With such a prestige he had no difficulty in making himself heard, and when it was found that he possessed the same strange power with which his father had conquered and fascinated the dramatic world the popular exultation was unbounded.

YOUTHFUL VENTURES.

Edwin Booth was not, in the scholastic sense of the word, educated. He attended school for a short time in boyhood, and he received some

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instruction from his father, whose scholarship was considerable. As a youth he participated in amateur theatrical performances, and while travelling with his father, as dresser and helper, he closely observed and involuntarily imbibed the professional methods of that histrionic prodigy,—methods, however, which at last were merged in a style of his own, which was unique. He made his first appearance on the stage, September 10, 1849, at the Boston Museum, as *Tressel,* in Cibber's perversion of "King Richard III.," his father acting *King Richard.* His first appearance on the New York Stage was made, September 27, 1850, at the National Theatre, Chatham Square, as *Wilford,* in Colman's tragedy of "The Iron Chest." In 1852 he went, with his father, to California, and there he remained till the autumn of 1856 (incidentally, 1854, making a professional visit to Australia and the Samoan and Sandwich Islands), acting whenever and wherever he could, playing parts of all kinds, and, between 1852 and 1856, gaining his first brilliant success.

The actor is born but the artist must be made,

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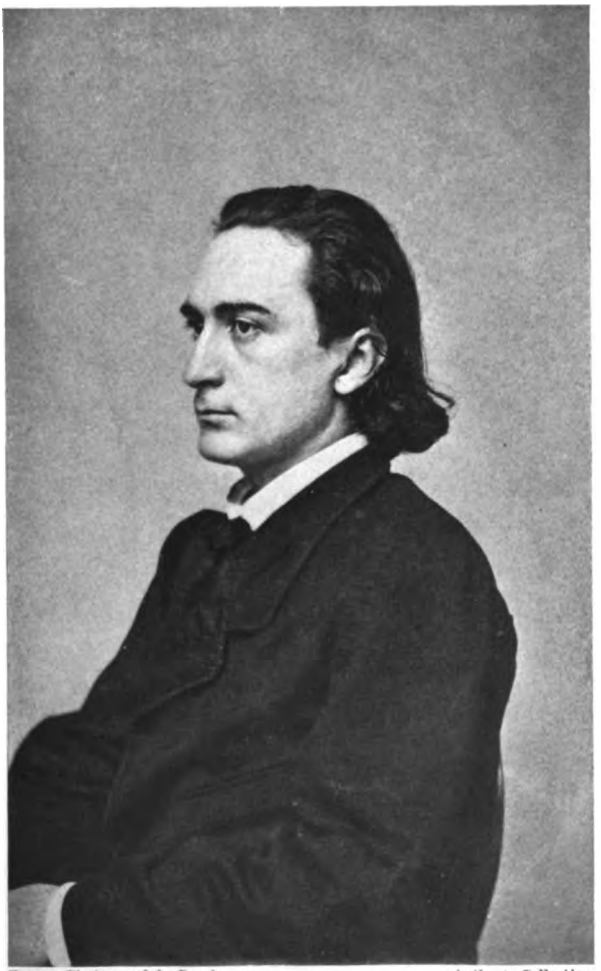

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EDWIN BOOTH, ABOUT 1860-'64

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and the actor who is not an artist only half fulfils his powers. Edwin Booth had not been long upon the stage before he showed himself to be an actor. During his first season he played not only *Wilford,* in "The Iron Chest," but also *Titus,* in "The Fall of Tarquin," and *Cassio,* in "Othello," and he played those parts auspiciously well; but his father, not less wise than kind, knew that the youth must be left to himself, to acquire experience, if he was ever to become an artist, and so left him in California, "to rough it," and thus he had four years of the most severe training that hardship, discipline, labor, sorrow, and stern reality can furnish. When he came East again, in the autumn of 1856, he was no longer a novice but an educated, artistic tragedian, still crude in some things, though on the right road, and in the fresh, exultant vigor, if not yet the full maturity, of extraordinary powers. But, though the early part of his California life was marked by hardship and all of it by vicissitude, his authentic genius speedily flamed out, and long before he returned to the Atlantic seaboard the

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news of his fine exploits had cleared the way for his conquest of all hearts. On reaching the East he appeared, at Baltimore, in the Fall of 1856, made a tour of a few cities, and April 20, 1857, gained a brilliant success, at the Boston Theatre, as *Sir Giles Overreach,* in Massinger's tragical drama of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." That night I saw him for the first time and saw his audience thrilled by his magnetic acting. From that hour his fame continually increased, and his progress was swift to indisputable eminence.

HAMLET AND *RICHELIEU.*

Booth early identified himself with two of the most enthralling characters in the Drama,—the sublime and pathetic *Hamlet* and the majestic, romantic, picturesque, tender, and grimly humorous *Richelieu.* He first acted *Hamlet* in 1854; he adopted *Richelieu* in 1856; and such was his success with the latter character that for many years afterward he made it a rule (acting on the sagacious advice of the veteran New Orleans manager, James H. Caldwell)

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always to introduce himself in that part before any new community. The popular sentiment toward him early took a romantic turn, and the growth of that sentiment was accelerated and strengthened by every important occurrence of his private life. In July, 1860, he was married to a lovely and talented woman, Miss Mary Devlin, of Troy, and in February, 1863, she died. In 1867 he lost the Winter Garden Theatre, in New York, which was burnt down on the night of March 22, that year, after a performance of John Howard Payne's "Brutus." He had managed that house, almost continuously, from 1862 to 1867, and he had accomplished sumptuous revivals of "Hamlet," "Othello," "The Merchant of Venice," and other plays there, and had obtained for it an honorable eminence; but when he built and opened (February 8, 1869) Booth's Theatre, New York, he proceeded to eclipse all his previous efforts and triumphs. The productions of "Romeo and Juliet," "Othello," "Richelieu," "Hamlet," "The Winter's Tale" and "Julius Cæsar" made at Booth's were marked by ample

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scholarship and magnificence. He managed that theatre till 1873, and when it passed out of his hands the play-going public endured a calamity. But the collapse of the actor's noble endeavor to maintain a great theatre in the first city of America, like every other conspicuous event in his career, served but to deepen the public interest in his welfare. He more than retrieved the losses which duplicity and bad advice piled on him in that venture. He made many a triumphal march throughout the length and breadth of the Republic. In 1876 he made a tour of the South which, so great was the enthusiasm his presence aroused, was nothing less than a royal progress. In San Francisco, where he filled an engagement of eight weeks, the receipts exceeded $96,000, a result at that time unprecedented on the dramatic stage. He acted in London and other cities of Great Britain (he appeared in that country in 1861, 1880, 1881, and 1882), and he made a tour, of unprecedented success, through Germany, in 1883. He was twice married, his second wife being Mary Frances McVicker (real name Run-

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nion), to whom he was wedded in 1869 and who died in 1881. He lived nearly sixty years, and during forty-two of those years he was on the stage. His last appearance occurred on the afternoon of April 4, 1891, at the old Brooklyn Academy of Music, as *Hamlet*. He died, June 7, 1893, at The Players, 16 Gramercy Park, New York (which Club he founded in 1888), and he was buried at Mount Auburn, near Boston. He earned and lost several fortunes, he left property valued at nearly $700,000, and,—which is of more importance to the world,—he exerted a tremendous influence for good, and left an illustrious name and an inspiring example. To think of Edwin Booth is immediately to be reminded of those leading events in his career, while to review them, even in a cursory glance, is to perceive that, notwithstanding calamities, sorrows, and a bitter experience of personal bereavement and of the persecution of envy and malice, he was, in many ways, a favorite of fortune.

Edwin Booth was closely associated with his father in many of his wanderings and strange

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and often sad adventures; loved him in life and sacredly cherished his memory. There is no doubt that the many sorrowful experiences of his youth deepened the gloom of his inherited temperament, and it is not possible to write comprehensibly about the son without bestowing considerable attention upon the father, by whom he was so much influenced, both as man and actor. Those who knew Edwin well were aware that he had great tenderness of heart and abundant playful humor; that his nature was one of extraordinary sensibility and that he sympathized keenly and cordially with the joys and sorrows of others; and yet that he seemed saturated with sadness, isolated from companionship, lonely and alone. It was this temperament, combined with a sombre and melancholy aspect of countenance, that helped to make him so admirable in the character of *Hamlet*. His father was the first to speak of his fitness for that part, when on a night in Sacramento they had dressed for *Pierre* and *Jaffier*, in "Venice Preserved." Edwin, as *Jaffier*, had put on a close-fitting robe of black

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velvet. "You look like *Hamlet*," the father said. The time was destined to come when Edwin Booth would be accepted all over America as the greatest *Hamlet* of the day. In the season of 1864-'65, at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, he acted that part for 100 nights in succession, accomplishing a feat then unprecedented in theatrical annals. Later, Henry Irving, in London, acted *Hamlet* 200 consecutive times,—October 31, 1874, to June 29, 1875; but this latter achievement, in more auspicious circumstances, in the capital city of the world, was less difficult than Edwin Booth's exploit, performed in turbulent New York in the closing months of the terrible Civil War.

"OLD BOOTH."

Junius Booth was one of those erratic beings who perplex observation and sometimes almost persuade belief that genius is madness. Many anecdotes of his amazing behavior, inexplicable except on the ground of insanity, have been told to me, in time past, by intimate friends of his, such as James Oakes (whom old New

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Yorkers and Bostonians have not forgotten), the comedian Frank S. Chanfrau, and various other players who acted with him. He was cursed with that propensity for intoxicating drink which is likely to beset public performers when fatigue, or dejection, or private grief makes them dubious of their power to "rise to the occasion"; but periodic inebriety did not fully explain the wild proceedings of Junius Booth. He was intellectual, spiritual, religious, accomplished, sensitive in temperament and domestic in taste, yet his conduct, at times, was delirious or outrageous, or both. The tragedian Forrest, who knew and liked him well, believed him to be mad. Late in the night of April 14, 1865, John McCullough went to Forrest's bedroom, in the Metropolitan Hotel, New York, and roused that veteran, telling him news had come of the assassination of President Lincoln, and that the murderer was said to be John Wilkes Booth—with whom both were acquainted. "But I don't believe it," McCullough declared. *"I do!"* said Forrest; "it's true. All those —— ——— Booths are crazy."

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JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH
THE BUST BY THOMAS R. GOULD

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The elder Booth was a short, spare, muscular man, with a splendid chest, a symmetrical Greek head, a pale countenance, a voice of wonderful compass and thrilling tone, dark hair, and blue eyes. Edwin's resemblance to him was chiefly obvious in the shape of the head and face, the arch and curve of the heavy eyebrows, the radiant and constantly shifting light of expression that animated the countenance, and the celerity of movement. Edwin's eyes were dark brown, and seemed to turn black in moments of excitement, and to emit light, as if they were suns, and they were capable of conveying, with electrical effect, the most diverse meanings,—the solemnity of lofty thought, the tenderness of affection, the piteousness of forlorn sorrow, the awful sense of spiritual surroundings, the woeful weariness of despair, the mocking glee of wicked sarcasm, the vindictive menace of sinister purpose, and the lightning glare of baleful wrath. In range of facial expressiveness his countenance was fully equal to that of his father. The aspect and acting of the elder Booth, though I was only a youth

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when I saw him, I can never forget. In the malignant part of *Pescara,* in Shiel's lurid tragedy of "The Apostate," he was a terrible presence. He seemed the incarnation of smooth, specious, hellish rapacity. His exultant malice seemed to buoy him above the ground. He floated rather than walked. His glance was deadly. His clear, high, cutting, measured tone was the exasperating note of hideous cruelty. He was acting a fiend then, and making the monster not only possible but actual. He gave a terrific expression of overwhelming power, but his face was not more brilliant than that of his renowned son; in fact, it was, if anything, somewhat less splendid in power of the eye: and he entirely lacked the grace for which Edwin was specially remarkable.

Chanfrau, an actor of fine and varied ability and one whose faculty of imitation was extraordinary, often told me stories of "old Booth" and adroitly copied his voice and manner. Booth commonly lodged at the City Hotel, in New York,—long ago demolished,—and his customary arena when acting in the metropolis was

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the theatre in Chatham Square, of which Chanfrau once happened to be stage-manager. Booth had been engaged for a few nights and Chanfrau had exacted from him a solemn promise that he would abstain from drink as long as his engagement lasted. "One night he went to the stage door," said Chanfrau, "and spoke to an attendant of his, saying, 'My lad, go over to the Hotel and tell the clerk that——' Just then I opened the door, outside which I had been standing, and stood before him,—whereupon he suddenly switched the message, which would have asked for a bottle of brandy, and concluded, very earnestly, pretending not to notice me, 'tell him that I want to know if there are *any letters* for me!' My coming saved him, but he was disappointed and much displeased."

A LEGACY OF WOE.

There are many anecdotes illustrative of that gifted player's infirmity, some of them comic, some of them sad. He was a glorious actor but a deplorably unfortunate man, and it cannot be doubted that some of his descendants

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inherited from him a legacy of woe. The appalling deed committed by his son John Wilkes was possible only to a madman, and his grandson, Junius, committed suicide, after killing his wife,—for no known reason but that he was despondent and miserable.

In the "Life of Edmund Kean" it is recorded that his attached and faithful servant, Fletcher, who customarily attended that vagrant genius and tried to keep him from tipsy excess, always desisted, in despair, when his master began to talk Latin, exclaiming, "He's going to make a beast of himself now, and nothing can stop him!" Edwin told me that one sign of an approaching paroxysm of his father's deplorable appetite for liquor was his use of a peculiar gesture, sawing the air, with his right hand beside his head, and that when, as sometimes happened, he would try to separate him from his boon companions, his father would use that ominous gesture, saying, "Go away, young man, go away! By God, sir, I'll put you a-board a man-o'-war, sir." "But," he added, "I could do more with him than any-

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body else, at such times." That incident is sufficiently significant of the trying circumstances in which Edwin Booth's boyhood was passed.

Edwin talked to me often and freely about his father, telling various anecdotes illustrative of his peculiarities and of the strangeness of his own experiences as the elder actor's companion and guardian. One of them I recall, relative to Junius and his apostle Thomas R. Gould, well known, in his day, in Boston, as a sculptor and also as a writer. Gould admired the elder Booth, almost to adoration. The most minute and instructive account that exists of Booth's acting was written by him,—a book called "The Tragedian,"—and Gould's marble bust of Booth, a noble work of art (made before the comedian Flynn broke his nose with a pewter pot), is the best likeness of that great actor, and those who never saw him can obtain a good idea of what sort of actor he was by reading that book and contemplating that portraiture. They preserve the image of a more massive actor, but not a more brilliant one, than Edwin Booth. Only one man of my time equalled

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Edwin Booth in his singular splendor of countenance,—the great New England orator, Rufus Choate. If Choate had been an actor, on the stage, as he was before a jury, with those terrible eyes of his and that passionate Arab face, he must have towered fully to the height of the tradition of George Frederick Cooke.

Gould's assiduous attentions to the elder Booth became wearisome to that eccentric man, and vexed him. Peculiar discretion is sometimes requisite to those who would praise and please eminent persons. Booth, when acting in Boston, customarily lodged at an old hotel called the Albion, situated in Tremont Street, at the northwest corner of Court Street. "One day," said Edwin, "my father dashed into the bedroom where I was sitting and, almost breathless with haste, exclaimed, 'Gould!—— Coming up! Say I'm out,' and, literally, *dove* underneath the bed. I received Mr. Gould, who seemed surprised not to find my father (I think he had seen him rushing upstairs), and he talked with me for several minutes. Then

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there was a moment of silence, and my father, becoming impatient, thrust his head out from under the bed, inquiring as he did so, 'Is that damned bore gone yet?' Imagine the effect!" Poor Gould had incurred the penalty of too much zeal. He was a man of uncommon ability in his profession, as many pieces of statuary, made by him, remain to testify. He was born in Boston, 1818, and he died in Florence, Italy, 1881.

Mrs. Asia Booth Clarke, wife of the distinguished and excellent comedian John Sleeper Clarke, wrote a life of her father, Junius Brutus Booth, in which she has recounted interesting passages in his career and chronicled significant and amusing anecdotes of his peculiarities. He was on the stage from 1813 to the time of his death,—1852. In his youth he served for a while in the British navy, showed some talent for painting, learned the printer's trade, wrote a little, and dabbled in sculpture,—all before he turned actor. The powerful hostility of Edmund Kean and his adherents drove him from the London Stage, though not till after he had

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gained honors there, and he came to America in 1821, and bought a farm at Belair, where he settled, and where his son Edwin (the seventh of ten children) was born. That farm remained in the family till 1880, when for the first time it changed hands. There is, or was, an old cherry-tree growing on it,—remarkable among cherry-trees for being large, tall, straight, clean, and handsome,—amid the boughs of which the youthful Edwin might often have been found, in his juvenile days. It is a coincidence that Edward L. Davenport and John McCullough, also honored names in American Stage history, were born on the same day of the same month as Edwin Booth, though in different years.

CALIFORNIA DAYS.

Edwin's experience during the period of his early professional training in California was, truly, a "strange, eventful history." At one time,—as he told me,—he lived in a hut, in the environs of San Francisco, with "Dave" Anderson (remembered as a good actor of

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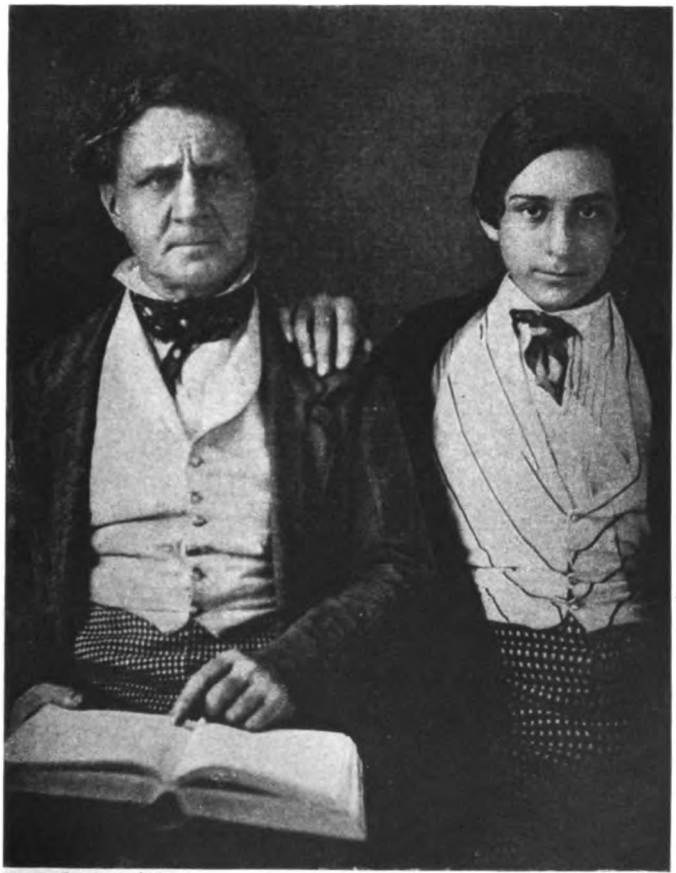

From a Daguerreotype *Author's Collection*

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH AND HIS SON EDWIN, 1850

"My father, in this picture" (so Edwin Booth told me), "is wearing one of my vests, and the book before him is a dictionary."—W. W.

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eccentric parts and old men), sharing everything, including house-work. "We had a horse and wagon," Edwin said, "and we drove into town to get provisions. Kidneys were cheap and we bought them whenever we could. Opposite the butcher's shop 'Dave' would rein in and hold up his hand, shouting 'Kid?' and often the butcher would shake his head and reply, 'No kid!' and we would drive on,—without meat for dinner." But his California life, if rough and hard, was wild and free, and I doubt whether he was ever again as truly happy as he was then. I know that in the later days of his great renown he was often very wretched.

SUSCEPTIBILITY OF SUFFERING.

A man more susceptible of suffering I have not known. One day, at his summer residence in Newport, Booth told me that he thought he had been cruel and felt sorry for it. He was much dejected. On inquiry as to the cause of his disquietude I learned from him that flies had been exceedingly numerous and trouble-

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some, and that he had made use of a liquid poison, recommended by an acquaintance, to destroy them. "I was much amused," he said, "in watching them, after they had tasted the stuff, because they would become as though drunk, and wabble about and topple over, in a most ludicrous manner. But suddenly I realized that as death was not instantaneous they must be *suffering,* and I have been grieved about it ever since." There was no affectation in this. His remorse was genuine and it was painful to see. The same extreme sensibility characterized his father. Edwin, speaking of him, told me, "He was the kindest-hearted man I ever knew. He would not allow any living thing on the farm [at Belair] to be killed. There was a huge, repulsive, villanous toad, whose favorite seat was on a projecting bit of stone in the side of a large well. I detested the thing, but my father would not allow it to be harmed or in any way disturbed or annoyed." A contemporary medical pundit has discovered and proclaimed that such feelings denote effeminate weakness; perhaps they do:

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for me, they imply fine humanity in their possessor, and I remember the moral injunction of Wordsworth's "Hart Leap Well,"—

> "Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that lives."

JOHN WILKES BOOTH.

John Wilkes was (so Edwin told me) his father's favorite child, but the father depended more on Edwin than on any other member of the family. As an actor John,—whose acting I saw and carefully observed, at Wood's Broadway Theatre,—was raw and crude, and much given to boisterous declamation and violent demeanor, but he was talented, and if he had lived longer and carefully studied his art he might have attained to a high position. He was handsome and dashing, he gained some measure of public admiration, and with members of the dramatic profession he was a favorite. The late Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, who had acted with him, entertained a high opinion of him—a fact which speaks much for his good qualities.

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McCullough liked him. So did John S. Clarke. So did the late Edwin Varrey, a fine actor and one of the best of men. His brother Edwin loved him and pitied him, and to the last he kept a framed picture of him in his bedroom. Everybody was horrified by his terrible crime,—no person more horrified or afflicted than Edwin, who immediately withdrew from the stage, and would never have returned to it if he had not been compelled to do so by the heavy financial responsibilities resting on him at that time, as manager of theatres in Philadelphia and New York.

The stage associates of John Wilkes Booth at first utterly disbelieved and scoffed at the statement that he had shot the President,—declaring it incredible that such a man could do such a deed. But so it was, and the wretched fugitive outlaw was shot and his body brought to Washington and buried beneath the granite basement floor of the old Capitol Prison: some years afterward the remains were disinterred and given to Edwin, who conveyed them to Baltimore, for interment near the grave of the

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elder Booth, in Fairmount Cemetery. A ridiculous story went the rounds of the newspaper press, not many years ago, to the effect that John Wilkes Booth escaped and went into the Southwest and was there recognized by several persons who had known him in early life, one of them being the comedian Jefferson. Another idle tale that was circulated told of Edwin's malediction on the memory of his brother,—the fact being that he carefully avoided the subject, seldom mentioned John's name, was haunted and unspeakably distressed by remembrance of his monstrous deed and tragic fate, and deplored it, and mourned for the wretched doer of it, all the days of his life. One strange scene in that afflicting tragedy was the destruction of the stage-wardrobe of John Wilkes. This occurred at night, in the basement of Booth's Theatre, where, under Edwin's direction, only one other person being present, every garment that had been owned by his brother was cast into a blazing furnace and totally consumed.

When Edwin reappeared on the stage, about nine months after the murder of Lincoln, a

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cruel attempt was made in the press of New York,—not in all the papers, but in one, particularly, of great influence,—to incite hostility toward him, because of his brother's crime, but that malignancy, unjust and cruel, utterly failed. I rejoice to remember that, as a journalist, speaking through several mediums, I used every means in my power to defend Booth and defeat that dastardly attack on him. His reentrance was made, January 8, 1866, at the Winter Garden, as *Hamlet,* and the welcome extended to him surpassed in its enthusiasm anything of the kind that old playgoers had ever seen, and it left no shadow of doubt that the community had no intention of permitting an innocent man to be ruined for the offence of a crazy relative. The theatre was densely crowded, and as Booth came on the stage the audience rose and cheered him again and again, making every possible demonstration of sympathy and friendship. As I looked around on that tumultuous assemblage I saw not even one person who had remained seated. The excitement was prodigious, and Booth was so much

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affected that he could hardly control himself sufficiently to begin his performance. He never acted better than he did on that memorable night.

THE "FAILURE" OF BOOTH'S.

Forty-six years have passed (1915) since Booth opened his magnificent theatre in New York, at the southeast corner of Twenty-third Street and Sixth Avenue,—a site then considered far "up-town." In that house sumptuous presentments were made of "Hamlet," "King Richard III.," "Othello," "The Merchant of Venice," "Julius Cæsar," etc., and the grandest production ever seen of Bulwer's noble play of "Richelieu" was accomplished. In his management of that theatre Booth was all that is meant by the word gentleman. Dion Boucicault, cynic though he was, said, "I have been in every theatre, I think, in Christendom, and Booth's Theatre is the only theatre that I have seen properly managed." Once when a clergyman wrote to Edwin asking to be admitted at a side door so that he might escape observa-

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tion, Booth answered: "There is no door in my theatre through which God cannot see."

It has long been customary to speak of Booth's Theatre as "a failure." It was not; it was a success. While in Booth's hands the theatre that bore his name was notably prosperous, and he would not have lost it but for injudicious direction of the financial affairs connected with the *building* of it, and bad advice accepted and acted on by Edwin, sequent to the great financial panic of 1873. "The *net profits* of the house, during its first year, were $102,000; during its second year, $85,000; during its third year, $70,000. A mortgage of $100,000 was lifted. The floating debt was reduced from $66,000 to $24,000. The decline in receipts, obviously, was due to a natural subsidence of public curiosity with reference to a new enterprise." (From my "Life and Art of Edwin Booth," 1893.) I believe any of the contemporary "Napoleons of the Theatre," who hold that "the dollar mark is the mark of success," and boast of "conducting the Theatre on

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a *business basis,*" would not be dissatisfied with a *net profit,* from a "commercially" conducted theatre, equal even to that obtained in the third year of Booth's management of his "splendid failure." It was the unreasonable and needless excess of cost in *construction* that overwhelmed Booth and led to his retirement from management. In a letter written to me in 1880 he said: "If the theatre had *cost* but a couple of *hundred thousand* instead of *over a million,* it never would have changed hands nor have ruined its proprietor." It is worth remembering that "over a million" meant more in 1869 than it does to-day—as, also, did a yearly net profit of $70,000. It is stupidly unjust to allege that the public of New York failed to support a great artistic ideal. The public, of New York and of the whole country, was always sympathetic with Booth, and it sustained whatever he produced, and that is a significant and a creditable record, for both sides, since nothing was produced by him that was not good. He had a high sense of his intellectual obligation to his art and to society,

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and he was public-spirited and unselfish in all his conduct.

A SIGNIFICANT TESTIMONIAL.

An interesting incident of Booth's professional career was the occurrence of a festival in his honor, given by a numerous company of his old friends, on June 15, 1880, by way of Farewell greeting to him, prior to his departure from America, to act in theatres of Europe. The invitation was signed by John R. Brady, Rev. H. W. Bellows, Algernon S. Sullivan, Charles Watrous, E. C. Stedman, Horace Porter, Lester Wallack, Joseph Jefferson, Lawrence Barrett, Jervis McEntee, S. R. Gifford, Whitelaw Reid, Rev. F. C. Ewer, Laurence Hutton, James R. Osgood, George W. Carleton, and myself. All those signatories, except General Porter and I have passed away, and of the goodly company that was assembled at that feast there are but few survivals. The invitation to Booth contained these words: "You will meet not only many comrades of your own profession but representatives of other voca-

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tions, all of whom are united in grateful admiration and profound and constant esteem not alone for your noble achievement as an actor, but for those virtues which have made your public career a model of integrity and your home life a blessing to all who have known you." In his reply Booth said: "As a mere empty compliment I might decline the honor; but as the expression of an affectionate good-will, such as no man has more cause than I have to cherish in his 'heart of heart,' and as a token of your genuine good wishes for my success in other lands, I heartily receive it." The festival began at noon and continued until night. Judge Brady presided. There was eloquent speaking, by Brady, Barrett, Ewer, Reid, Porter, and Sullivan. A part of my own contribution to the general tribute was the following poem, which, perhaps, may appropriately be included in this chapter of reminiscence:

His barque will fade, in mist and night,
Across the dim sea-line,
And coldly on our aching sight
The solemn stars will shine,—

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All, all in mournful silence, save
For ocean's distant roar,—
Heard where the slow, regretful wave
Sobs on the lonely shore.

But, O, while, winged with love and prayer,
Our thoughts pursue his track,
What glorious sights the midnight air
Will proudly waft us back!
What golden words will flutter down
From many a peak of fame!
What glittering shapes of old renown
That cluster round his name!

O'er storied Denmark's haunted ground
Will darkly drift again,
Dream-like and vague, without a sound,
The spectre of the Dane;
And breaking hearts will be the wreath
For grief that knows no tear,
When shine on Cornwall's storm-swept heath
The blazing eyes of Lear.

Slow, 'mid the portents of the storm
And fate's avenging powers,
Will moody Richard's haggard form
Pace through the twilight hours;

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And wildly hurtling o'er the sky
The red star of Macbeth,—
Torn from the central arch on high,—
Go down in dusty death!

But,—best of all! will softly rise
His form of manly grace,—
The noble brow, the honest eyes,
The sweetly patient face,
The loving heart, the stately mind
That, conquering every ill,
Through seas of trouble cast behind,
Was grandly steadfast still!

Though skies might gloom and tempest rave,
Though friends and hopes might fall,
His constant spirit, simply brave,
Would meet and suffer all;
Would calmly smile at fortune's frown,
Supreme o'er gain or loss;
And he the worthiest wears the crown
That gently bore the cross!

Be blithe and bright, thou jocund day
That golden England knows!
Bloom sweetly round the wanderer's way,
Thou royal English rose!

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And English hearts (no need to tell
How truth itself endures!)
This soul of manhood treasure well,
Our love commits to yours!

Farewell! nor mist, nor flying cloud,
Nor night can ever dim
The wreath of honors, pure and proud,
Our hearts have twined for him!
But bells of memory still shall chime,
And violets star the sod,
Till our last broken wave of time
Dies on the shores of God.

HIS PLAYS AND FAVORITE PARTS.

It is particularly worth while at this time, when dominant theatrical managers, closing their eyes to the obvious truth, still, parrot-like, declare that "Shakespeare Spells Ruin," to remember and emphasize the fact that Booth gained his eminence and made his fortune entirely with the Standard Drama. His repertory included eleven of Shakespeare's plays. He liked to act in comedy, as a relief to his feelings, and he often did so, but by nature he

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was a tragedian, and it was in tragedy that he excelled. Edmund Kean was supreme in pathos: the elder Booth in terror: Edwin Booth moved with equal facility in either realm, and in all the terrific or afflictive exacting passages of pure tragedy or the climactic passages of "Richelieu" his voice was magnificent, his action illuminative, his elocution faultless, his fiery energy that of the tempest. He was a wonderful actor, and especially he was wonderful in his faculty of artistic control: after he had curbed and subdued the exuberance of youth he never lost perfect command of himself. Once when he had just finished one of the most tremendous outbursts of passion in *Othello,* and aroused his audience to the highest pitch of excitement, he moved "up-stage" in, apparently, pitiable anguish, and said, in a low tone, to his nephew, Wilfred Clarke, standing in the wings: "Will, did you see that big rat run across the stage?"

Edwin loved most to act *Richelieu.* He grew weary of acting *Hamlet.* His wife, Mary McVicker, told me it was her custom to lay

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out, in the morning, the dress of the part that he was to act at night, and so to apprise him of the approaching professional duty, and that whenever he saw the dress of *Hamlet* he would become moody and fretful, but that when he saw the garments of *Don Cæsar de Bazan* or *Petruchio* he was pleased. He liked *Shylock,* for an actor's reason—that it is a splendidly effective part: his fine performance of it was exceedingly popular. He discarded *Sir Edward Mortimer, Sir Giles Overreach,* and *Pescara,* because he considered them too dark and repellent, and he told me that he was inclined to discard *Bertuccio,* for the same reason. First and last he acted at least two hundred parts, but his customary repertory included only sixteen.

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.

The bust of Booth as Shakespeare's *Brutus* and that of John Gilbert as *Sir Peter Teazle,* standing side by side in The Players, stir many memories and prompt many reflections. Gilbert was twenty-three, and had been six years on the stage, before Edwin Booth was

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born; and when, at the age of sixteen, Booth made his first appearance Gilbert had become a famous actor. The younger man, however, speedily rose to the high level of the best dramatic ability as well as the best theatrical culture of his time; and it is significant of the splendid triumph of tragic genius, and of the advantage it possesses over that of comedy in its *immediate* effect upon mankind, that when the fine and exceptional combination was made (May 21, 1888, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York), for a performance of "Hamlet" for the benefit of Lester Wallack, Edwin Booth acted *Hamlet,* with John Gilbert for *Polonius,* and Joseph Jefferson for the *First Grave-Digger.* Booth had his artistic growth in a peculiar period in the history of dramatic art in America. Just before his time the tragic sceptre was in the hands of Edwin Forrest, who never succeeded in winning any ardent devotion from the intellectual part of the public, but was constantly compelled to dominate a multitude that never heard any sound short of thunder and never felt anything till

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it was hit with a club. The bulk of Forrest's great fortune was gained by him with "Metamora," which is rant and fustian. He himself despised it and deeply despised and energetically cursed the public that forced him to act in it. Forrest's best powers, indeed, were never really appreciated by the average mind of his fervent admirers. He lived in a rough period and he had to use a hard method to subdue and please it. Edwin Booth was fortunate in coming later, when the culture of the people had increased and when the sledge-hammer style was going out, so that he gained almost without an effort the refined and fastidious classes. As long ago as 1857, with all his natural grace, refinement, romantic charm, and fine bearing, his impetuosity was such that even the dullest sensibilities were aroused and thrilled and astonished by him,—and so it happened that he also gained the multitude.

The circumstances of the Theatre and of the lives of players have greatly changed since the generation went out to which such men as Junius Booth and Augustus A. Addams

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belonged. No actor would now be so mad as to put himself in pawn for drink, as Cooke is said to have done, nor be found scraping the ham from the sandwiches provided for his luncheon, as Junius Booth was, before going on to play *Shylock*. Our Stage has no longer a Richardson to light up a pan of red fire, as that old showman once did, to signalize the fall of the screen in "The School for Scandal." The eccentrics and the taste for them have passed away. It seems really once to have been thought that the actor who did not often make a maniac of himself with drink could not be possessed of the divine fire. That demonstration of genius is not expected now, nor does the present age customarily exact from its favorite players the performance of all sorts and varieties of parts. Forrest was the first of the prominent actors to break away from the old usage in this latter particular. During the most prosperous years of his life, from 1837 to 1850, he acted only about a dozen parts, and most of them were old. The only new parts that he studied were *Claude Melnotte, Richelieu,*

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Jack Cade, and *Mordaunt,* the latter in the play of "The Patrician's Daughter," and he "recovered" *Marc Antony,* which he particularly liked. Edwin Booth, who had inherited from his father the insanity of intemperance, conquered it utterly, and nobly and grandly trod it beneath his feet; and as he matured in his career, through acting every kind of part, from a dandy negro up to *Hamlet,* he at last made choice of the characters that afforded scope for his powers and his aspirations, and so settled upon a definite, restricted repertory. His characters were *Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, Othello, Iago, King Richard the Second, King Richard the Third, Shylock, Cardinal Wolsey, Marcus Brutus, Benedick, Petruchio, Richelieu, Lucius Brutus, Bertuccio, Ruy Blas,* and *Don Cæsar de Bazan.* These he acted in customary usage, and to these he occasionally added *Antony, Cassius, Claude Melnotte,* and the *Stranger.* The range thus indicated is extraordinary; but more extraordinary still was the evenness of the actor's average excellence throughout the breadth of that range.

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EDWIN'S ACTING.

Booth's tragedy was better than his elegant comedy. There have been several other actors who equalled or surpassed him in *Benedick* or *Don Cæsar*. The comedy in which he excelled is that of silvery speciousness and bitter sarcasm, as in portions of *Iago* and *King Richard the Third* and the simulated madness of *Lucius Brutus,* and the comedy of grim drollery, as in portions of *Richelieu,*—his expression of those veins being wonderfully perfect. But no other actor of his time, except Henry Irving, has equalled him in certain attributes of tragedy that are essentially poetic. He was not at his best, indeed, in all the tragic parts that he acted; and, like his father, he was an uneven actor in the parts to which he was best suited. No person can be said to have known Booth's acting who did not see him play the same part several times. His artistic treatment was generally found adequate, but his mood or spirit continually varied. He could not at will command it, and when it was absent his performance

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seemed cold. This characteristic is, perhaps, inseparable from the poetic temperament. Each ideal that he presented was poetic; and the suitable and adequate presentation of it, therefore, needed poetic warmth and glamour. Booth never went behind his poet's text to find a prose image in the pages of historic fact. The spectator who took the trouble to look into his art found it, indeed, invariably accurate as to historic basis, and found that all essential points and questions of scholarship had been considered by the actor. But this was not the secret of its power upon the soul. That power resided in its charm, and that charm consisted of its poetry. Standing on the lonely ramparts of Elsinore, and with awe-stricken, preoccupied, involuntary glances questioning the star-lit midnight air, while he talked with his attendant friends, Edwin Booth's *Hamlet* was the simple, absolute realization of Shakespeare's haunted prince, and raised no question, and left no room for inquiry, whether the Danes in the Middle Ages wore velvet robes or had long flaxen hair. It was dark, mysterious, afflicted, melancholy,

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sympathetic, beautiful,—a vision of dignity and of grace, made sublime by suffering, made weird and awful by "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." Sorrow never looked more wofully and ineffably lovely than his sorrow looked in the parting scene with *Ophelia,* and frenzy never spoke with a wilder glee of horrid joy and fearful exultation than was heard in his tempestuous cry of delirium, "Nay, I know not; *is it* THE KING?"

An actor who is fine only at points is not, of course, a perfect actor. The remark of Coleridge about the acting of Edmund Kean, that it was like "reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning," has misled many persons as to Kean's art. Macready bears a similar testimony. But the weight of evidence will satisfy the reader that Kean was, in fact, a careful student and that he did not neglect any detail of his art. This was certainly true of Edwin Booth. In the level plains that lie between the mountain-peaks of expression he walked with as sure a footstep and as firm a tread as on the summit of the loftiest crag or the verge of the

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steepest abyss. In 1877-'78, in association with me, he prepared for the press an edition of fifteen of the plays in which he customarily acted. There is not a line in either of those plays that he had not studiously and thoroughly considered; not a vexed point that he had not scanned; not a questionable reading that he had not, for his own purposes in acting, satisfactorily settled. His Shakespearean scholarship was extensive and sound, and it was no less minute than ample. His stage business had been arranged, as stage business ought to be, with scientific precision. If, as *King Richard the Third,* he was seen to be abstractedly toying with a ring upon one of his fingers, or unsheathing and sheathing his dagger, those apparently capricious actions would be found to be done because they were illustrative parts of that monarch's personality, warranted by the text and context. In early years, when acting *Hamlet,* an accidental impulse led him to hold out his sword, hilt foremost, toward the receding spectre, as a protective cross,—the symbol of that religion to which *Hamlet* so frequently

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recurs. The expedient was found to justify itself and he made it a custom. In the Graveyard Scene of the tragedy he directed that one of the skulls thrown up by the *First Grave-Digger* should have a tattered and mouldy fool's-cap adhering to it, so that it might attract attention, and be singled out from the others, as "Yorick's skull, the king's jester." These are little things; but it is of a thousand little things that a dramatic performance is composed, and without this care for detail,—which must be precise, logical, profound, vigilant, unerring, and at the same time always unobtrusive, subservient, and seemingly involuntary,—there can be neither cohesion, nor symmetry, nor an illusory image consistently maintained; and all great effects would become tricks of mechanism and detached exploits of theatrical force.

The absence of this thoroughness in such acting as that of Edwin Booth would instantly be felt; its presence seldom is adequately appreciated. All felt the perfect charm of the illusion in the great Fourth Act of "Richelieu,"—one of the most thrilling situations, as Booth filled it,

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that ever was created upon the stage; but it would not have been felt had not the foreground of character, incident, and experience been prepared with consummate thoroughness. The character of *Richelieu* is one that the elder Booth could never act. He tried it once, upon urgent solicitation, but he had not proceeded far before he caught *Joseph* around the waist, and with that astonished friar in his arms proceeded to dash into a waltz, over which the curtain was dropped. He had no sympathy with the moonlight mistiness and lace-like complexity of the ascetic, many-fibred nature of *Richelieu*. It lacked, for him, the reality of the imagination, the trumpet blare and tempest rush of active passion. But Edwin Booth, coming after Forrest, who was its original in America, made *Richelieu* so entirely his own that no actor could stand a comparison with him in the character. Macready was the first representative of the part, and his performance of it was deemed magnificent; but when Edwin Booth acted it in London, in 1880, old John Ryder, the friend and advocate of Macready,

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who had participated with him in all his plays, said to the American tragedian, with a broken voice and with tears, "You have thrown down my idol." Two at least of those great moments in acting that everybody who sees remembers were furnished by Booth in this character,—the defiance of the masked assailant, at Rueil, and the threat of excommunication delivered upon *Barradas*. No spectator possessed of imagination and sensibility ever saw, without utter forgetfulness of the stage, the imperial entrance of that *Richelieu* into the gardens of the Louvre and into the sullen presence of hostile majesty. The same spell of genius was felt in kindred moments of his greater impersonations. His *Iago*, standing in the dark street, with sword in hand, above the prostrate bodies of *Cassio* and *Roderigo*, and as the sudden impulse to murder *Cassio* strikes his brain, breathing out in a blood-curdling whisper, "How silent is this town!" his *Bertuccio*, begging at the door of the banquet-hall, and breaking down in hysterics of affected glee and maddening agony; his *Shylock's* torrent of wrath; his *Macbeth* going to

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the murder of *King Duncan;* his *King Lear,* at that supreme moment of intolerable torture when he parts from *Goneril* and *Regan,* with his wild scream of revenges that shall be the terrors of the earth; his *King Richard the Third,* with the gigantic effrontery of his "Call him again," and with his whole thrilling and wonderful utterance of the awful remorse speech with which the king awakens from his last earthly sleep,—those, among many others, rank with the best dramatic images that ever were chronicled, and may well be cited to illustrate Booth's invincible and splendid adequacy at the great moments of his art.

EARLY PERFORMANCES.

In the earlier part of his career Edwin Booth was accustomed to act *Sir Giles Overreach, Sir Edward Mortimer, Pescara,* and a number of other parts of the terrific order, which afterward he discarded. He was fine in every one of them. The first sound of his voice when, as *Sir Edward Mortimer,* he was heard speaking off the scene, was eloquent of deep suffering,

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concentrated will, and a strange, sombre, formidable character. The bland, exquisite, icy, infernal joy with which, as *Pescara,* he told his rival that there should be "music" was almost comical in its effect of terror: it drove the listener across the line of tragical tension and made him hysterical with the grimness of a deadly humor. His swift defiance to *Lord Lovell,* as *Sir Giles,* and indeed the whole mighty and terrible action, with which he carried that scene,—from "What, are you pale?" down to the grisly and horrid viper pretence and reptile spasm of death,—were simply tremendous. This was in the days when his acting yet retained the exuberance of a youthful spirit, before "the philosophic mind" had checked the headlong currents of the blood or curbed imagination in its lawless flight. And those parts not only admitted of bold color and extravagant action but demanded them. Even his *Hamlet* was touched with that elemental fire. Not alone in the great junctures of the tragedy,—the encounters with the *Ghost,* the parting with *Ophelia,* the climax of the Play-

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Scene, the slaughter of poor old *Polonius* in delirious mistake for the *King*, and the avouchment to *Laertes* in the graveyard,—was he brilliant and impetuous; but in almost everything that quality of temperament showed itself, and here, of course, it was in excess. He ceased to hurl the pipe into the flies when saying "Though you may fret me, you can not play upon me"; but he used to do so then, and the rest of the performance was kindred with that part of it. He needed, in that period of his development, the more terrible passions to express. Pathos and spirituality and the mountain air of great thought were yet to be. His *Hamlet* was only dazzling,—the glorious possibility of what it became. But his *Sir Giles* was a consummate work of genius,—as good then as it ever afterward became, and better than any other that has been seen since, not excepting that of E. L. Davenport, which was tremendously powerful. And in all kindred characters he showed himself a man of genius. His success was great. The admiration that he inspired partook of zeal that amounted almost to craziness. When he

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walked in the streets of Boston in 1857 his shining face, his compact figure, and his elastic step drew every eye, and people would pause and turn in groups to look at him.

GREAT MOMENTS, AND TRADITION.

The lurid flashes of passion and the vehement outbursts in the acting of Edwin Booth are no doubt the points that most persons who saw him most clearly remember. Through these a spectator naturally discerns the essential nature of an actor. The image of George Frederick Cooke, pointing with his long, lean fore-finger and uttering *Sir Giles's* imprecation upon *Marrall,* never fades out of theatrical history. Garrick's awful frenzy in the storm scene of *King Lear,* Kean's colossal agony in the farewell speech of *Othello,* Macready's heartrending yell in *Werner,* Junius Booth's terrific utterance of *King Richard's* "What do they i' the north?" Forrest's hyena snarl when, as *Jack Cade,* he met *Lord Say* in the thicket, or his volumed cry of tempestuous fury when, as *Lucius Brutus,* he turned upon *Tarquin* under the black mid-

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night sky,—those are things never to be forgotten. Edwin Booth provided many such great moments in acting, and the traditions of the Stage will not let them die. To these no doubt we must look for illuminative manifestations of hereditary genius. Garrick, Henderson, Cooke, Edmund Kean, Junius Booth, and Edwin Booth are names that make a natural sequence in one intellectual family. Could they all have been seen together, they would, undoubtedly, have been found, in many particulars, kindred. Henderson flourished in the school of nature that Macklin had revived and Garrick developed,—to the discomfiture of Quin and all the classics. Cooke had seen Henderson act, and was thought to resemble him. Edmund Kean worshipped the memory of Cooke and repeated many of the elder tragedian's ways. So far, indeed, did he carry his homage that when he was in New York, in 1824, he caused Cooke's remains to be taken from the vault beneath St. Paul's church and buried in the church-yard, where a monument, set up by Kean and restored by his son Charles, by Sothern,

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and by Edwin Booth, still marks their place of sepulture. That was the occasion when, as Dr. Francis records, in his book on "Old New York," Kean took the index finger of Cooke's right hand, and he, the doctor, took his skull, as relics. Kean's foundation on Cooke's style in acting was not the imitation of a copyist; it was the spontaneous devotion and direction of a kindred soul. The elder Booth saw Kean act, and although injured by a rivalry that Kean did not hesitate to make malicious admired him with honest fervor. "I will yield *Othello* to him," he said, "but neither *Richard* nor *Sir Giles.*" Forrest thought Edmund Kean the greatest actor of the age, and copied him, especially in *Othello.* Edwin Booth derived directly from his father not only the instruction of example and precept but also an admiring yet critical impartment of the tradition of Edmund Kean.

MIRTH AND MERRIMENT.

In one of Edwin's notes to me (he frequently wrote, and I possess several hundred of his let-

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ters, all in his peculiar, fine, sometimes almost indecipherable writing) there is an instructive reference to a view of his character prevalent when he was acting at the Winter Garden and had been bereaved by death of his first wife, Mary Devlin,—whom he idolized. "The labor I underwent at that time" (so he wrote), "with domestic affliction weighing heavily upon me, made me very unfit for social enjoyment of any kind, and I was forced to shut myself up a great deal. This, of course, made people think me haughty, self-conceited, and *'Hamlet-y'* all the time; whereas I was very weary and unhappy." The misapprehension to which he thus alluded was once general, and more or less it followed him through life. He was, constitutionally, pensive and sad. He had inherited a moody temperament, his mind was prone to introspection, and he had been reared in close association with themes of tragedy. No person who looks on mortal life with searching, comprehensive gaze can wholly withstand the saddening influence of the pathetic spectacle which it presents,—notwithstanding all its pageantry.

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Booth, who saw widely and who deeply felt the significance of what he saw, certainly could not withstand it, and it was precisely because his nature was thus attuned to melancholy, while his person was one of exquisite symmetry and his method of art, both elocutionary and histrionic, one of surpassing clarity, power, and grace, that he became the best *Hamlet* that ever trod our Stage.

But there was another aspect of Booth's complex personality,—an aspect not less delightful than surprising: he could be one of the merriest of companions. He never was, in even the least particular, "self-conceited," nor was he *"Hamlet-y"* in private life, at any time. I have known many players, but I have not known one who possessed a readier faculty and quicker perception of humor, or an ampler capability of its enjoyment, than were evinced by Edwin Booth. This side of the man, however, was revealed only to his intimate friends,—and those were few. In private talk with me his merriment was sometimes astonishing: at least, so it seems to me now, when I review the past and

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remember how bitter were the afflictions which had befallen him, for he had been tried by some of the most terrible calamities that ever tested the fortitude of a human soul. He possessed abundance of anecdote, and when he told a comic story, as he often did, his melodious, finely modulated voice, his dark, brilliant eyes, his expressive countenance, and his naturally dramatic manner gave to every word and point an illuminative meaning and a richly comic effect.

The anecdotes,—of which there are many,—relative to that grim, arbitrary, splenetic tragedian, Macready, seemed to afford him special enjoyment. One which he told in a particularly blithe spirit, animating it by involuntary action as he spoke, was related to him by Mrs. Charles Kean (Ellen Tree). That famous actress, when a girl, acted with Macready, and there was a moment in one of the performances when he placed his hand, by no means gently, on her juvenile head, rumpling her hair and causing her much annoyance. She complained of this, but her complaint was disregarded, and

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the eminent actor continued to express the fervor of his emotion by pawing her head with much more than needful energy. "I was mischievous," she said, "and one night I had my hair done up with a number of small pins in it, points upward, and that time when he seized me by the hair he instantly let go, with a horrified gasp and a grunt of rage, and after that he was very careful when he touched my head." Booth's imitation of Macready's mingled solemnity, consternation, and wrath was exceedingly ludicrous, acting that scene.

At times his humor was satirical. When leaving a church, in Boston, after the funeral of the eminent essayist and critic Edwin Percy Whipple,—obsequies which he had attended in company with Lawrence Barrett and at that friend's suggestion, and during which he had been annoyed as well as amused by the convulsive facial contortions of the officiating clergyman,—he remarked to Barrett: "I knew Mr. Whipple, but I never expected I should be so sorry to attend his funeral." When a stage-struck lunatic named Mark Gray attempted to

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murder him, in Chicago, during a performance of "King Richard II." (April 23, 1879, at McVicker's Theatre), firing at him twice, with a pistol, from a place in the second balcony, Booth calmly advanced to the front of the stage and, pointing at the madman, directed that he be seized, and then, after a brief absence from the scene,—to reassure his wife,—composedly finished his performance. Later he caused one of the bullets,—both of which had passed close by his head,—to be extracted from a piece of scenery where it had lodged, and had it mounted as a charm for his watch-chain, thus inscribed: *"To Edwin Booth, from Mark Gray."* That sinister relic he customarily wore.

PRUDENT RETICENCE:—HIS LETTERS.

Booth seldom spoke censure of anybody. His spirit was charitable and generous. He particularly deprecated the far too common and always wrong custom of indiscriminate speech in mixed company and about the absent, knowing that groundless antipathy is a perilous

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motive of opinion and that loose speaking often makes endless misery. I have often heard Booth repeat, with emphatic approbation, a moral rhyme that he had somewhere read, which declares that,

"If for a tranquil mind you seek
These things observe with care:
Of whom you speak, *to* whom you speak,
And *how*, and *when*, and *where*."

In Booth's letters to me, which are numerous, ranging over a long period and relative to many subjects, his mood is sometimes pensive, sometimes gay, sometimes humorous, sometimes satirical, often as fluently pungent as those of Byron, of whose epistolary manner I have often been reminded when reading them. He probably never saw Sterne's precept, "write naturally, and then you will write well," but he certainly obeyed it. I might, at more leisure, cull out many specimens of his offhand style. This is one that shows him in a genial and characteristic light:

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"Mount Vernon, New York,
"February 22, 1880.

"Dear Will:—

"'"Tis long since we have known each other,'—so long, that, save for 'The Tribune,' I had lost all trace of you. I'm the culprit, however, for I remember your last to me received no answer. I sent you a Mount Vernon paper, t'other day: the account of the Magonigle 'show,' up there, which it contained, I see you noticed. Last night he gave another, and I took my folks to witness the performance. Harry's girls (three of 'em) are really very clever,—the youngest particularly,—and Harry also did his little tragedy 'biz' remarkably well. I always wished him to try the stage. As a light comedian he would be better than many we have, while his serious ability, as shown last night, surprised me. The girls are really talented and very pretty. It's a pity they cannot all go into the business: 'twould pay 'em better than the labor of teaching kindergarten and piano-playing, which the girls do, while Harry drudges at book-keeping in Stewart's shop.

"We went last week to [Steele] Mackaye's theatre,—once to see the play, and again to inspect the building. It is, certainly, by all odds, the perfection of a comedy theatre: beautiful to behold, in every detail.

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I hope, with all my heart, that Mackaye will be amply repaid for this great improvement in theatrical decoration and mechanism,—for that (as far as it will go) is a wonderful advance. I don't see why the same method should not be applied to other than the 'shiftless' scenes of comedies. By raising and lowering his stage a better effect in changing scenes would be given than that made in the old way. At Booth's the rising and sinking scenes had a good effect and were applauded, especially when the two movements occurred simultaneously, as they did in 'Hamlet,' several times. Whether it could be successfully done on a larger scale is the question: if so, then the old split-scene style should be abandoned, in every case where depth can be obtained.

"I want to do something for 'ould Ireland,' but have had so many calls of dollars on me that I felt unequal to much in the privy purse way, and therefore asked Abbey and Vincent to help me at the Academy,—as you may have seen, by a card I sent to 'The Herald.' After Abbey's matinée for the same cause proved a failure, he sent word that he wanted to talk with me, about dropping the idea. But I shall not,—*cannot* do it, decently, and have been in a fume since I sent the message, for I've been unable to find him, and the advertisement not appearing to-day, as I expected,

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annoys me exceedingly. I shall decide to-morrow what is to be done, and let you know. My date in Brooklyn is May 3,—one week. It has taken me over a month to reply to your inquiry on that head, so I guess it is accurate!

"My wife has been gradually wasting away for several months, and is very feeble, from nervous prostration. A severe cough, from last September, neglected, distresses her very much, and only since the last ten days has she had a doctor. I've been, at times, quite alarmed for her. Her will is something wonderful: she won't give up, but, though ill enough to be in bed, she insists on going out as often as possible. This has kept me on the visiting list pretty much all the time; in the evenings, either at the theatres or at the houses of her acquaintances,—none of which is altogether agreeable to me; but then, you know, I have a daughter, who must have society, &c. Thank God, my boy, that your daughters are boys, and can go out without an escort, and that your boys can look after 'Ma,' when the 'old man' wants to roost, as I do—often—when I'm forced to become a swallow-tail and flit 'hither an' yon,' among the butterflies, for wife and 'darter's' sakes!

"I hope to sail, by the Gallia, in June, but I go without an engagement, and may find all houses closed

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to me. I care very little whether or not I act in London. Somehow, I fancy that, like me as much as the public might, the chance for any great success there is gone,—for the present, at all events. I have so little energy, less ambition, and still less enthusiasm on the E. Booth subject, that the bare idea of acting there is irksome. Perhaps, after a tour through Ireland and Scotland, I may feel more 'i' the vein'; but I shall then arrive in London too late for *the* season, and in the midst of fogs and filth, which will depress us all so much that I'll lose heart again. I am going more as a tourist, and chiefly because I believe the change will benefit both wife and daughter—but, of course, I shall, like old Hackett, take my 'fat' along (you know, the old gentleman always carried his *Falstaff* belly with him, on all his hunting and fishing tours,—by mere chance, of course!). I may get an opportunity to act for some charity purpose, for some actor's benefit,—to 'play the people in' (or out),—but, unless I take a theatre, which I won't do, I doubt if there'll be an opening for 'a crushed tragedian' at any of the regular shops. Irving has, evidently, determined to keep on his beaten track, which is quite right, and other managers are 'skeery' of Shakespeare. We shall see, when I get on the field.

"I wrote to [Tom] Taylor, and sent him a copy of

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'The Fool's Revenge,' apologizing for my change in his play, and offering to pay the damage if I act it in England. I've done more for the play than it ever did for me, however; but that's 'off': I'll make it right with him.

"I believe Abbey has secured Mrs. Bowers and McCullom to 'support' me, but, as I have not seen him since the idea was first suggested, I am not sure. I hope so, at all events, I mean, as to Mrs. B. The gentleman I know nothing of, as an actor.

"My wife reads the distressing accounts of Ireland's condition, and dreads more than ever the idea of going: the sickness in Ireland and the fogs of England keep her in a constant scare.

"The mention of [Francis A.] Bangs, as one of Abbey's company for me, is incorrect,—I am happy to state. He's a good enough actor, in certain parts, but rather cranky to deal with, and, on the whole, is too 'great.' 'Great actors' are very queer cusses to handle; besides, there are so many of 'em! Nearly every company counts a dozen 'sich.'

"Adieu! See me soon.

"Ever yours,

"EDWIN."

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"LAST SCENE OF ALL"

The last days of Edwin Booth afforded a signal illustration of Tennyson's expressive line, "The set gray life and apathetic end." His successful establishment of The Players, upon which his heart had long been fixed and by which, as he said to me, he confidently hoped to cause the actors to hold their profession in higher esteem, had fulfilled his final ambition, and, though for a while he remained on the stage, he neither attempted nor desired to accomplish anything more. His home was in the Club, where his rooms, reverently kept as they were when he left them forever, still remain unoccupied and unused,—an impressive and touching memorial. One evening, when I was sitting with him by his fireside, and he was smoking his pipe and ruminating, I commended to him the resources of travel, to break the monotony of custom. "But I have travelled so much," he said, "and wherever I go people want to entertain me, to make me 'a lion,' and I have no peace. Here is my bed, and here is the fire,

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and here are the books,—and here *you* come to see me." Then puffing at his pipe, he added, "I suppose I shall wear out here." So it was to be. Physical pain harassed him: bodily weakness had made him more and more languid: weariness of everything had settled on his mind. The noble patience and the gentleness of his spirit never waned, but his expectation was turned eagerly toward the end. Death, to him, was the crowning mercy and blessing of life, truly "a consummation devoutly to be wished." "I cannot grieve at death," he wrote to me, in a time when I was in deep affliction, "it seems, to me, the greatest boon the Almighty has granted us. . . . Why do you not look at this miserable little life, with all its ups and downs, as I do? At the very worst, 'tis but a scratch, a temporary ill, to be soon cured by that dear old doctor, Death—who gives us a life more healthful and enduring than all the physicians, temporal or spiritual, can give."

His last two years were passed in desultory reading, mostly on religious subjects, and in musing over the past, and so he drifted away.

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As an actor he was great indeed,—greater, as I have come to think, in pondering on the subject, even than his wonderful father. But to him *living* was infinitely more important than *acting*. His mental attitude toward his acting was not unlike that of Sir Walter toward his writing,—tolerance of an incident to his life, not conviction of its supreme importance as an object and an end. The essential elements of his nature were goodness, simplicity, and power. He honored his vocation and never by word or deed did he countenance misuse of it. But, though he exercised an almost unrivalled sway over both the affections and the emotions of his audience, it was comparatively seldom, even at the meridian of his acting, that his nature was stirred to its profoundest depths and his full powers aroused and exerted. When that occurred his acting was sublime. He did not possess the organ voice or the huge physical frame of Forrest or Salvini, but, when fully excited and liberated, he possessed the faculty of pure tragic power and imparted an electrical force such as I have never known equalled.

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Among all the players he, Jefferson, and Henry Irving were the nearest of my friends. Yet such was his pitiful suffering toward the last that when,—thousands of miles away,—I heard of his death I was glad.

Booth might have continued to act, as Irving did, up to the end of his days; but while Irving's tremendous power of will made him glorious to the final moment, Booth's dejection of mind and infirmity of body would have caused him to present a spectacle of failing powers; and so when he asked my counsel as to leaving the stage I advised him to retire. As I recall those two actors, Booth and Irving, whom I knew so long and so well, it seems to me that, while in many ways widely dissimilar, they were closely kindred in genius, domestic experience, brilliant meridian achievement, and a bleak and melancholy loneliness at last. The history of the Stage, in England and America, during the last half of the nineteenth century, is intimately entwined with the characters and careers of those remarkable men. The English chieftain possessed far greater executive faculty

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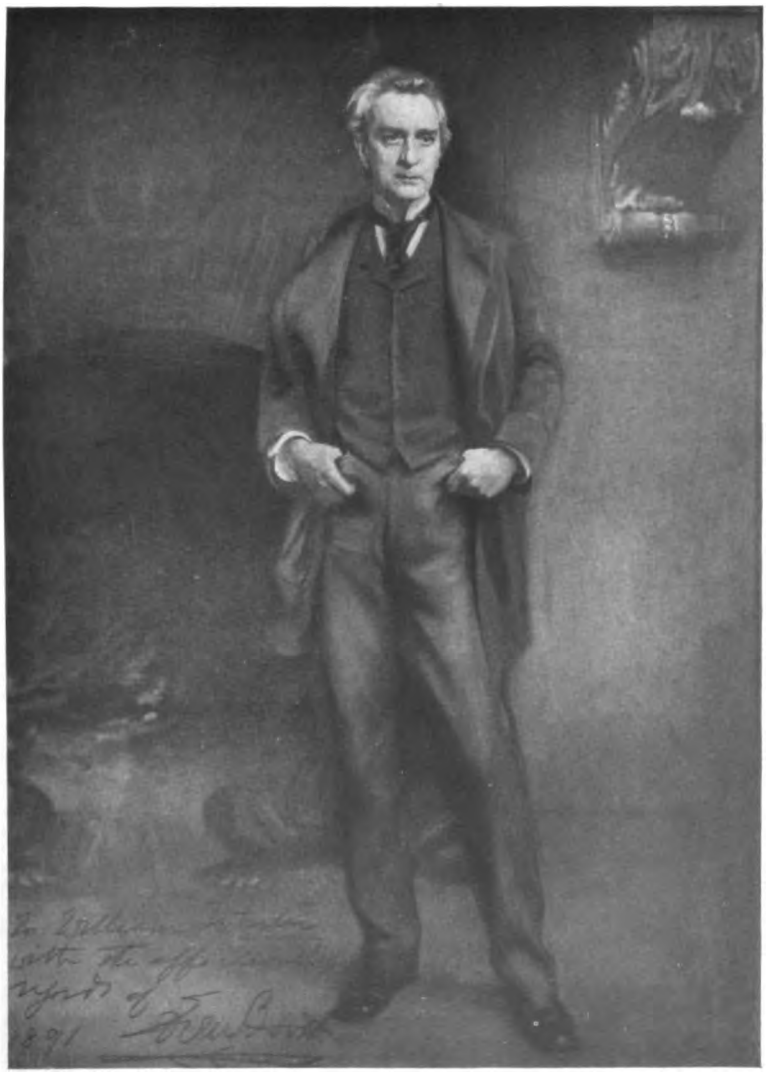

EDWIN BOOTH

AFTER THE PORTRAIT IN OIL BY JOHN S. SARGENT

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in the conduct of the practical business of life: the American, in some ways as much a leader, was more a dreamer. Around their names is a halo of romance that will never fade. Edwin's character and conduct of life are summarized in *Hamlet's* words to *Horatio* (which once he told me he hoped might be his epitaph),—

> "Thou hast been
> As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
> A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
> Has ta'en with equal thanks."

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VI.

AUGUSTIN DALY.

1838—1899.

INFORMED BY INSTINCT AND BY WORLDLY SENSE,
HE MADE A WISE RESERVE HIS SURE DEFENCE;
LOOKED WHERE THE RISING STAR OF PROMISE SHONE,
PRESCRIBED HIS PATH, AND TROD THAT PATH ALONE;
WALKED CALMLY ON THE WAY HE WISHED TO GO;
SWERVED NOT TO PLEASE A FRIEND OR 'SCAPE A FOE;
TO ART DEVOTED ALL THAT FORTUNE GAVE,
AND FOR HIMSELF GAINED—HONOR, AND A GRAVE.

In earlier publications of mine there is some commemoration of Augustin Daly, in part biographical, in part auxiliary to a record and examination of his many fine theatrical productions, and also there is a Monody on his death. I have long desired, however, to do more than this in honor of an extraordinary man; to depict him, if possible, "in his habit as he lived"; to designate his personal peculiarities; to specify salient traits of his character, to preserve informative

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recollections of him as he was in private life, and to indicate his position in the brilliant galaxy of players, men and women, with whom he was closely associated,—many of whose careers he shaped and guided and led to a splendid fulfilment. The present book, which at first I had intended should relate exclusively to Players, affords me opportunity to realize that desire. Daly, though not a player, possessed the player's dramatic instinct in an unusual degree; his name and influence are inseparably linked with the story of the American Theatre, and it is appropriate that I should include in this series of vagrant memories a reminiscence of that remarkable man,—a lifelong friend of mine, a person of exceedingly complex nature, and, in point of reticence and tenacity of purpose, combined with a sensitive temperament and a disposition originally of rare amiability, altogether exceptional.

Men of high ideals are often disparaged as "impractical,"—as "dreamers" or "visionaries." Daly, who certainly was a man of high ideals, recognizing every duty imposed by his pro-

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fession, also knew every detail of business involved in the pursuit of it. No emergency could daunt him; no obstacle presented itself which he did not instantly meet and overcome. His courage was indomitable. He was continuously impelled by a lofty purpose, and in his complete control and intellectual use as well of the practical machinery of his vocation as of its literary and artistic implements he made many contemporary managers completely insignificant. Most of his survivors in the theatrical field continue in that state—the number of real theatrical managers in America to-day being small. A few years ago Daniel Frohman (who has since abandoned the field of drama to venture in that of the moving picture), talking to me, in Los Angeles, where we chanced to meet, indicated in one expressive sentence the difference between Daly and most of his competitors. "Augustin Daly," he said, *"managed a theatre:* the rest of us are merely *theatrical managers."*

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MANAGER, AUTHOR, DRAMATIST, AND CRITIC.

Daly was not only a manager; he was an exceptionally able dramatist, a biographer, a writer of fiction, and a dramatic critic. When I first saw him he was a journalist, associated with a New York weekly paper, long ago extinct, called "The Sunday Courier," to which he contributed stories and for which he also wrote notices of the acted drama in New York. He was a rapid worker, deeply interested in the Theatre, eager, practical, and exceptionally industrious. The owner and editor of "The Courier" was Charles Frederick Briggs (a sprightly writer, who used the pen names of "Harry Franco" and "Ferdinand Mendoza Pinto," and who figures in Poe's caustic "Literati"), and by Briggs, with whom I was well acquainted, Daly and I were made known to each other more than fifty years ago. We had tastes and ambitions in common; we were working in a kindred field; we soon became friendly, and, except for one short period of estrangement, we lived on

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terms of cordial friendship to the day of his death.

The criticisms of plays and actors, then and later, written by Daly were notable for direct, explicit, piquant statement of opinion, often condemnatory. At one time, and for several years prior to 1869, he simultaneously wrote theatrical articles not only for "The Courier," but for "The Sun," "The Evening Express," "The Daily Times," and "The Citizen." One prominent characteristic of his criticism was its spontaneous, unaffected, complete disregard of established reputations. It showed itself to be the testimony of an observer who did not admire specific actors merely because it had been customary to admire them, but who simply described what he saw, and stated the impressions which the spectacle had produced. There was no deference to established convention. There was no waste of words. The mind of the writer was radical and straightforward. That characteristic of Daly's theatrical criticism afterward conspicuously appeared in Daly's theatrical management. The writing of criti-

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cism, however, became with him only incidental to the more serious vocation of writing plays and of establishing himself as a theatrical manager. Before 1869 several of his dramas,—notably "Under the Gaslight," "A Flash of Lightning," and "Leah the Forsaken," the latter freely adapted from the German of Mosenthal,—had been successfully produced, and in that year he severed his relations with the press and embarked in the business of management, which, except for one interval, he never relinquished till his death, thirty years later.

THE THEATRICAL *IVANHOE*.

At the time when Daly took that bold step the leading theatre in New York was Wallack's. Booth's Theatre had been open only six months. There were only about twelve other considerable theatres in the city. The name of Wallack had been associated with the New York Stage for fifty-one years,—James W. Wallack, the Elder, having first appeared here in 1818, and having become manager of the National Theatre, corner of Leonard and

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Church streets, in 1837, and of Wallack's Theatre, near the southwest corner of Broadway and Broome Street, in 1852, subsequently, 1861, moving uptown, to Thirteenth Street. That manager, a superb actor and long conspicuously a favorite in New York society, dying in 1864, was succeeded by his son, Lester Wallack, with whom no one successfully disputed preëminence in the managerial field till Daly opened the Fifth Avenue Theatre.

The enterprise of Daly in attempting to rival Wallack affected many observers at first much as the audacity of the unknown *Ivanhoe* affected the populace when that knight rode into the lists of Ashby-de-la-Zouche and struck, in mortal defiance, the shield of the redoubtable *Templar*. It seemed to such observers absolutely incredible that any person should expect to compete with the splendid comedy company maintained by Wallack. Daly was esteemed a man of talent, but of his capability as a theatrical manager no evidence had been provided, and no person foresaw the brilliant achievements by which his career was to be distin-

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guished. He did not, however, leave the community long in doubt of his ability to manage a theatre. In the first of his play-bills the young manager stated with singular felicity the purpose with which he was opening his theatre. "This theatre," he said, "is opened for the *production* of whatever is novel, original, entertaining, and unobjectionable, and the *revival* of whatever is rare and worthy in legitimate drama." A right plan of theatrical management could not have been better or more tersely designated. The theatre was in Twenty-fourth Street. The first performance, that of T. W. Robertson's "Play," was given on August 16, 1869. Twenty-five plays were performed in the course of the first season, three of them being Shakespeare's.

The first Fifth Avenue, under Daly's management, lasted until January 1, 1873, when it accidentally caught fire, after a performance of "False Shame," by Frank Marshall, had ended, and within a few hours it was consumed. Three weeks later, January 21, the second Fifth Avenue Theatre was opened by Daly, at No. 728

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Broadway, in a stone building which had originally been a church, and there he conducted his business till June 23, meanwhile leasing and rehabilitating the St. James, in Twenty-eighth Street, which,—as the third Fifth Avenue,—he opened on December 3, 1873, and managed till September 15, 1877. Coincident with that labor he directed the Grand Opera House for three seasons, 1872-'75. A few days after the opening of the second Fifth Avenue Theatre, Daly wrote to me the following letter, which, together with one written soon after the opening of the first house of that name, well exhibits his attitude toward criticism and his work:

"Grand Opera House, New York,
"January 26, 1873.

"My dear Mr. Winter:—

"Every hour since Tuesday I have been busy putting the finishing touches on the theatre—and I have delayed till this, my only day of rest, to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your most generous lines about my opening. The entire press have been more than kind toward me: but your brilliant essay upon the work that culminated on the 21st of January is so earnest

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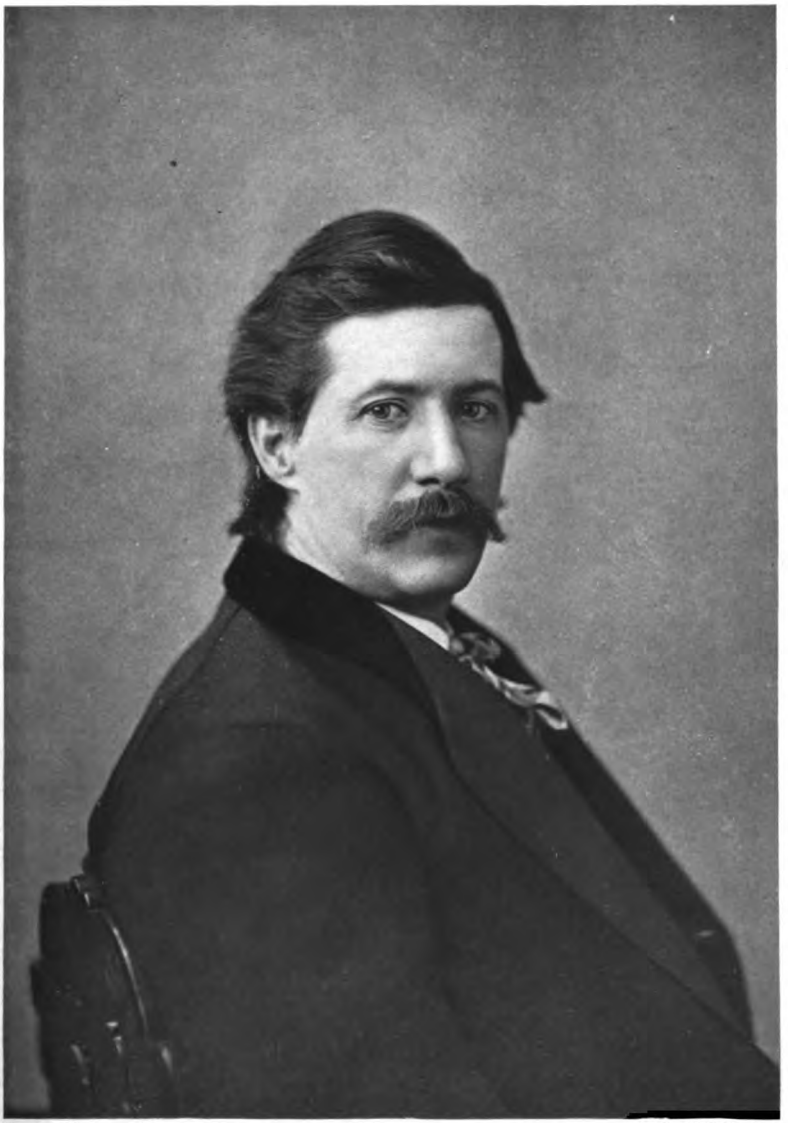

From a Photograph by Sarony *Author's Collection*

AUGUSTIN DALY, ABOUT 1870

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and so sincere,—I will not add *just*, because you have *always* been so, even when you had most cause to be partial, that you will permit me to thank you, if only for the deep pleasure the entire article has given me. It encourages me to harder work—if that is possible —and I beg you will believe that now as ever there is no one's opinion I respect so deeply as yours.

"Faithfully yours,

"AUGUSTIN DALY."

"214 West Twenty-fifth Street,

"[New York] June 22, 1869.

"My dear Winter:—

"I have to thank you very much for your kindness in forwarding my letter—so strangely misdirected to 'The Tribune' office.

"I have to thank you, too, for some very kind and encouraging words in 'The Tribune' and in 'The Review,' as well as in your pleasant note—for me, and for my new venture. It is beyond all gainsay a dangerous voyage I am undertaking,—and only cautious piloting and kind breezes in the shape of gentle counsels from such friends and critics as you can prosper.

"I expect and hope to be sharply criticised,—but criticism in that case I shall welcome, as the mariner

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does the firm and steady breeze which sends him to his goal.

"I should like above all things to have an hour's talk with you some day, about these and other matters: perhaps you can spare me a call some afternoon: I am home always between four and six o'clock.

"Sincerely yours,

"AUGUSTIN DALY."

An interregnum of nearly two years began in 1877, during which at first he led his company on a tour, and later lived abroad as a looker-on in London and other European capitals. On September 17, 1879, he opened Daly's Theatre at Broadway and Thirtieth Street, and there he maintained his managerial leadership to the last. He made several professional visits to Europe, presenting his company in London and other British cities and in France and Germany. In 1891 he began the building of Daly's Theatre in Cranbourne Street, Leicester Square, London, and on June 27, 1893, he opened that house with a performance of "The Taming of the Shrew," Ada Rehan giving her brilliant impersonation of *Katharine.* He

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died suddenly in Paris, France, June 7, 1899. His body was brought home and entombed in Calvary Cemetery, Long Island.

A ROSTER OF GENIUS.

At the beginning of his career as a theatrical manager Daly was financially backed by his father-in-law, John Duff, and also he was advised and assisted by an experienced and able actor, Daniel H. Harkins, who held the post of stage-manager. One of the expedients of enterprise to which he early resorted was the engagement of many notable or auspicious players,—many more, in fact, than he really needed or could use,—his purpose being to concentrate and intensify public interest in his theatre. By this means he assembled a dramatic company that was not only exceptionally numerous but of extraordinary variety and talent. Names that once were bright in local renown have grown dim in the deepened haze of many years, but to persons who are even superficially acquainted with the history of our Stage the facts will possess a certain signifi-

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cance that at nearly one and the same time Daly's dramatic forces included Edward Loomis Davenport, John Brougham, John Gilbert, Charles Fechter, John K. Mortimer, Charles Wheatleigh, William Pleater Davidge, Charles Fisher, James Lewis, W. J. Le Moyne, Stuart Robson, Charles F. Coghlan, George L. Fox, Daniel H. Harkins, Louis James, John Drew, George Clarke, Mrs. John Wood, Mrs. G. H. Gilbert, Fanny Morant, Henrietta Chanfrau, and Catherine Lewis; that Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Edward A. Sothern, Charles Mathews, Fanny Janauschek, and Adelaide Neilson acted under his management; and that among the players whose talents were developed and whose reputations were obtained under his tuition and guidance were Agnes Ethel, Fanny Davenport, Clara Morris, Ella Dietz, Linda Dietz, Sara Jewett, Emly Rigl, and,—most important of all,—Ada Rehan.

That entertaining old recorder Thomas Davies, accrediting a figment of gossip he had heard, says that "the Stage never perhaps produced four such handsome women at once

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as Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Mountfort, and Mrs. Bowman," and he mentions that "when they stood together in the last scene of 'The Old Bachelor' the audience was struck with so fine a group of beauty, and broke into loud applause." That sort of spectacle was often seen on Daly's stage. Agnes Ethel's loveliness was of a peculiarly sweet, insinuating, enticing character. She actually was a woman of uncommonly strong will and great vital energy, but her apparent fragility was such that she seemed to be a sylph. Fanny Davenport was a voluptuous beauty, radiant with youth and health, taut and trim of figure, having regular features, a fair complexion, golden hair, sparkling hazel eyes, and a voice as naturally musical and cheery as the fresh, incessant rippling flow of a summer brook.

CLARA MORRIS AND HER MAGICAL CHARM.

Clara Morris possessed the magical charm of distinction, a fine person, an expressive face, a deeply sympathetic voice, and a pervasive strangeness of individuality which, while it made

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her unique among her associate players, fascinated the attention of her auditors. With exceptional talent for the expression of pathos, that singular being was endowed with a keen sense and capability of humor. I have not met her equal among women,—excepting Mrs. John Wood,—in the felicitous telling of a comic story. As an actress she "would drown the stage with tears." Sara Jewett was like a rose in her luxuriant, youthful bloom and like a lily in her suggestiveness of innocence, purity, an ingenuous mind, and a kind heart. No such group of beauties as Daly assembled had before been seen on our Stage, nor has any such group been seen since.

With almost every one of the players whose names I have mentioned it was my fortune to possess a personal acquaintance, in some cases intimate, and I am admonished of the flight of time when I reflect that most of them have passed away. Their merit in acting and their many brilliant achievements are as fresh in my memory as though they were things of yesterday, but the eyes are closed that once glowed

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with the fires of genius, and the voices that once made music are silent forever. Merry old George Holland, whose abounding humor neither poverty, sickness, nor the infirmity of age could quench; formal, kindly, dignified, scholarlike John Gilbert, the noblest of noble "old men"; John Brougham, the gay, buoyant, sparkling Irish gentleman, from whose presence care fled dismayed, and who carried happiness with him wherever he went; Davenport, frank, simple, manly, the most versatile of American actors, the best *Macbeth* and the best *Mercutio* of his time; Charles Fisher, whose breadth of impersonative faculty was prodigious, and who is remembered as one of the most unselfish and unpretentious of human beings,—they all are gone,—they, and many, many more,—into the world of shadows, into the Great Unknown.

There are able, interesting, worthy actors on the stage to-day, but the present generation nowhere sees such an actor as John Gilbert in such characters as *Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Anthony Absolute, Sir Robert Bramble, Lord Ogleby, Jesse Rural, Mr. Oakley,* and *Old*

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Dornton. It seems but a little while, yet it is more than thirty-six years, since, at a Lotos Club dinner to Gilbert, (November 30, 1878), after I had spoken in his honor and celebrated his career, he left his seat at the table, came down the long, brilliantly lighted room, and, grasping my hands, exclaimed in deep emotion: "I never had such a tribute; I never knew till now how important to others I might be!" He was indeed a great comedian; to him his art was a religion.

I remember speaking with Davenport immediately after he had amazed and thrilled his audience by the wonderful performance that he gave, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in 1870, of *Sir Giles Overreach,*—that terrific ideal of ruthless, malignant selfishness and exultant evil. He spoke with enthusiasm about the impersonation of the part by the elder Booth, with whom in early life he had acted, as *Wilford,* and intimated that his *Sir Giles* had been based on that of the old tragedian. "I never played the part so well as to-night," he said, "and I shall never play it so well again"; and then he added: "I

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will star in it and make as great a popular success as Jefferson has made in *Rip Van Winkle.*" He had not considered (as I ventured to warn him) that characters such as *Sir Giles* and *Luke* and *King Richard the Third* and *Iago,* however much the performances of them may inspire intellectual admiration, never enlist the sympathy of the human heart. His real conquest, —and it was indeed real,—was gained with such parts as *Damon, St. Marc,* and *Black-Ey'd Susan's* gallant sailor lover, *William,* in which he was perfection.

With Brougham, whose professional triumphs I had so often seen and recorded, I parted when he was on his death-bed, and only a few hours before he died, and I shall never forget the last sad, abject, hopeless look with which he closed his eyes in mute farewell.

Every name in the long chronicle has its special associations. Those Fifth Avenue Theatre days were singularly vital with enterprise, with achievement, with enjoyment, with delightful friendships, with continual intellectual benefit, and,—steadily pervading my

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remembrance of them,—I see the alert, resolute, expeditious, animating figure of Augustin Daly. Is it indeed true, as so often and vigorously alleged, that the present period of theatrical syndicates, frivolities, fads, and "isms" is a brighter and better period than the Stage has ever known? I wonder!

"The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree—
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me?"

CHARLES FECHTER AND DALY.

Daly's professional association with Charles Fechter did not last long, but while it lasted it was advantageous to both. Many years later, when it became known to me that the late Richard Mansfield was inclined to form an alliance with Daly for a production of "The Merchant of Venice,"—Ada Rehan to be the *Portia* and Mansfield the *Shylock*,—I spoke with Daly on that subject, endeavoring, at Mansfield's request, to promote the plan, since it promised, if feasible, a good result; but I gravely doubted

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whether those two men would agree, and, in conference with Daly, I did not conceal this doubt. "You are quite mistaken," he said; "I should get along with Mansfield exactly as I did with Fechter,—have one grand row at first and get it all over. The moment Fechter began to bully I turned on him and told him what I thought of him and of his acting and his conduct, and I made it perfectly clear that I intended to be, *at all times and in all circumstances,* the manager and absolute master of *my* theatre. We never had any trouble after that."

Such a course would not have succeeded in dealing with Richard Mansfield, although well adapted for controlling Fechter, who, like most men of an arrogant, domineering disposition, was a moral coward. Within his proper sphere, —that, namely, of romantic melodrama, typified by "Monte Cristo," "The Corsican Brothers," "No Thoroughfare," and "Ruy Blas,"— Fechter was a capital actor. He required moments of convulsive passion for the full display of his peculiar powers. At such moments he became inspired by a kind of frenzy,—law-

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less, yet not wholly ungoverned,—which sometimes produced thrilling effects on sensibility and imagination, causing wild excitement and suggesting vivid images of human nature exalted into the avenging Fury or the dreadful, inevitable, invincible Fate. His performance of the dual parts in "The Corsican Brothers" was as nearly perfect in that way as anything that has been seen. His *Ruy Blas,* in the Third Act; his *Claude Melnotte,* in the Fourth Act; his *Lagardère,* and his *Obenreizer* (in the Alpine scenes) illustrated the special excellence of his acting. In Shakespeare he was not successful, one reason being that he carried into poetic tragedy a colloquial tone and a familiar manner, and thus, in striving to be "natural," became prosy and trivial. By Daly he was judiciously restricted to the things he could do best.

Fechter could be companionable if flattered, but he was captious and unreasonable; he quarrelled with almost everybody, and he was ruined by colossal vanity and reckless self-indulgence. Even Charles Dickens, by whom he was extrava-

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gantly admired, was compelled to confess that he had "a perfect genius for quarrelling." The defect was deeper than that. It was a craze of vanity, and it ultimately made his career, which might have been one of continuous beneficence and unclouded renown, a miserable failure. No actor was ever provided with better opportunities, and seldom has any actor made a worse use of them.

DALY AND CLARA MORRIS.

Daly's management of the Fifth Avenue Theatre was, in the second season, specially signalized by his employment and professional education of Clara Morris, a native of Toronto, Canada,—her real name was Morrison,—who, before she came to New York, had gained experience in the West. Her first appearance at the Fifth Avenue Theatre was made on September 18, 1870, as *Anne Silvester,* in a play that Daly had adapted from the powerful and tragically effective novel of "Man and Wife," by the prince of story-tellers, Wilkie Collins. The part,—as Daly long afterward

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told me,—had been allotted to Fanny Davenport, and by her had been rehearsed; but Miss Davenport did not like it and wished to be relieved of it, and to take instead the part of *Blanche Lundy*. That arrangement ultimately was made, and *Anne Silvester* was given, not without hesitation, to Miss Morris. "I telegraphed to her former manager, old John Ellsler," said Daly to me, "asking him whether she could play it, and I received two words in answer: 'Try her.'" The trial was made, and the result was a remarkable success. Better acting than that of Miss Morris was seen on the night when "Man and Wife" had its first representation, for James Lewis appeared as *Sir Patrick Lundy*, William Davidge as *Bishopriggs*, and Mrs. Gilbert as *Hester Dethridge*, but the strange, passionate personality of Clara Morris attracted all eyes, stirred the imagination, and deeply impressed the feelings. She was like no other, and upon the total achievement of her long subsequent career that would be a sufficiently comprehensive and illuminative comment.

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FANNY DAVENPORT

From a Photo. by Sarony *Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

CLARA MORRIS

IN EARLY LIFE

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It would not be accurate to designate Clara Morris as either a tragedian or a comedian. She was, intrinsically, an expositor of human nature in self-conflict, of the revolt of humanity against affliction and suffering, of erring virtue tortured in the miserable bonds of fatal circumstance. Representative performances of hers were *Jezebel; Cora,* in "Article 47"; *Madeleine Morel; Mercy Merrick,* in "The New Magdalen"; *Alixe; Esther,* in "The New Leah," and *Miss Multon,* in the domestic drama so named, which had been derived from a French play based on Mrs. Henry Wood's once widely popular novel of "East Lynne." Her acting was pervaded by a bizarre quality and fraught with hysterical passion and intense tremulous nervous force, but it revealed neither definite intellectual method nor consistent artistic design. The structure of it was perplexed by aimless wanderings across the scene, motiveless posturing, facial contortions, wailing vocalization, extravagant gesture, and spasmodic conduct,—as of a haphazard person taking the uncertain chance of somehow coming out right

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at last. That sort of wild emotional deliverance is effective upon a nervous, excitable auditory, and Miss Morris was long a popular figure on our Stage. She remained with Daly till 1878, when she went to the Union Square, which, in the previous year, had been converted into a theatre of the first class by A. M. Palmer. Long afterward, speaking to me, Daly said: "Morris was one of the most interesting and talented women in my company, but she was very vain and her head was turned by her success. I soon found her resentful of instruction, so I let her severely alone. She found that she could not get along without assistance, and one day at rehearsal she asked me why I didn't help her any more. I told her I didn't care to waste my time on performers who thought themselves perfect, and after that she took a different tone and begged me to direct her as before, which I did. She was a clever woman, but she never did anything more, after she left me, than she had done already on my stage."

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ADA REHAN'S ADVENT.

Daly rendered many, various, and important services to the Theatre of his time, but his recognition and development of the genius of Ada Rehan were the most valuable of them all. A large volume would hardly contain the complete story of her career. In Ada Rehan the Stage was illumined and graced by an actress who not only preserved but bettered the brilliant traditions of Peg Woffington and Dora Jordan. Her rich, healthful, refined beauty, her imposing stature, her Celtic sparkle of mischievous piquancy, her deep feeling, her round, full, clear, caressing voice, her supple freedom of movement, the expressive play of her features, and the delightful variety and vivacity of her action,—who that ever appreciated could ever forget them? She raised the character of Shakespeare's *Shrew* from the level of turbulent farce, and made it a credible, consistent, continuously interesting, and ultimately sympathetic image of human nature. She was the best *Rosalind* ever seen in our time, or, as far

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as extensive reading on the subject enables me to judge, ever seen since "As You Like It" was written, and I confidently believe that, within her special field,—of archness, raillery, sentiment, coquetry, and noble, womanlike feeling,—she has seldom been equalled and never excelled. She triumphed not only by reason of what she did but by reason of what she *was*, —a woman in whom great goodness of heart was reinforced by purity and strength of mind. Under any circumstances, thus inspired, she would have risen to eminence in the dramatic vocation, but she would not have gained so much success or gained it so soon if she had not attracted the attention of Augustin Daly, and if he had not devoted himself to her training and advancement.

When, in reminiscent mood, I muse on the brilliant career of Ada Rehan, as known to me, the character of the woman seems even more interesting than the accomplishment of the actress. She was a creature of simplicity and truth,—intrinsically sincere, modest, and humble. Buoyant glee, a dominant attribute of

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her acting, was equally characteristic of her conduct in private life, and no stress of care and trouble,—from which she has not been exempt,—could dash her spirits or deaden her sensibility. She was ever a passionate lover of the beautiful, alike in nature and art, and she could discern and cordially admire the beauty of other women,—a happiness not usual with her sex. She was intrinsically guileless and noble; generous and grateful; never forgetting kindness, and never speaking ill of anybody. She is the last of the old order, of all my friends among the players, but when we meet, as sometimes we do, I find her still the same gentle, merry, hopeful, sympathetic creature whom first I knew as a young and ardent girl, with all her life before her.

Ada Rehan was not associated with the Fifth Avenue Theatre. Her advent on Daly's stage did not occur until after he had ceased to manage the Fifth Avenue and had returned from his temporary period of rest and observation in Europe. Miss Rehan (who had attracted his attention while playing *Bianca,* in Garrick's

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version of "The Taming of the Shrew," in Albany) acted under his management in the spring of 1879, at the Grand Opera House, as *Mary Standish,* in his play of "Pique," and at the Olympic Theatre as *Big Clemence,* and also, later, as *Virginie,* in his version of Émile Zola's "L'Assommoir"; but it was not till he opened Daly's Theatre, producing the comedy of "Love's Young Dream," in which she acted *Nelly Beers,* that she entered on the career which since has given such abounding evidence of dramatic genius and so much exalted and refined pleasure to the public, both European and American. That career has, in other works of mine, been described and commemorated.

CHARACTER.

In character Daly was self-centred. Toward the world his demeanor, ordinarily, was austere. He believed in himself. He possessed extraordinary power of will and an amazing capability of endurance. Under all circumstances he decided promptly and acted instantly.

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EDWIN BOOTH AS *BERTUCCIO,* IN "THE FOOL'S REVENGE"
FROM THE DRAWING BY W. J. HENNESSY

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From a Photograph by Sarony *Author's Collection*

ADA REHAN AND JOHN DREW
IN "THE RAILROAD OF LOVE"

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He was not afraid to take risks. He neither boasted in prosperity nor complained in adversity. He never broke faith with the public. He never asked indulgence and he never complained of the attitude of the public toward him or his ventures. He kept his troubles to himself. Even when heart-broken by the sudden death of his two young sons,—who died (January 1, 1884) within a few hours of each other,—he, outwardly, maintained his iron composure, kept his theatre open, and attended to his business in it without deviation from customary routine. He was appreciative of friendship and glad to possess it, but he did not seek it. He was not solicitous of propitiating anybody. He did not depend on other persons; he depended on himself. He was mindful of the past and willing to profit by its teaching, but he lived in the present and looked toward the future. He was a genial host, but I never knew him to be tranquil or to impart tranquillity. He stimulated action. His mind was continuously concentrated on the active business of life. He thought quickly, acted quickly, moved

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quickly. I walked with him one day from end to end of the Canongate in Edinburgh,—a favorite street with me, and one with which I had long before made myself familiar,—and, at his request, pointed out to him many of its notable features of antiquity and association. He saw each and every one, but he never lingered. The walk was ended in less than thirty minutes. I took similar walks with him in London, a city well known to him, but there also he moved in a flash of expedition. It was not that he lacked appreciation of what he saw; it was that his temperament was restless and his ambitious purposes and plans were never remote from attention. His quiet hours, I conjecture, were those which he devoted to religion. He was a member of the Roman Catholic Church and a strict observer of its ordinances.

"GRANDMA" GILBERT AND "JIMMIE" LEWIS.

"Their memory
Shall as a pattern or a measure live."

There was nothing current in theatrical life around him that Daly did not observe. Once

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when I chanced to meet him, in Chicago, he said: "I hear of a new man who has a capital singing voice, at one of the theatres. Come along and let's hear him!" That vocalist was subsequently engaged for his theatre. He was continually alert to discover good actors, his desire being, at all times, to strengthen his company. No promising novice escaped his attention. His judgment about acting was exceptionally quick and correct. He frequently made discoveries. He early perceived, for example, the exceptional humor, fine talent, and large potentialities of success in Mrs. G. H. Gilbert and James Lewis, and as soon as he could engage them he did so, and he speedily found the plays and characters in which it was inevitable they would delight the public—as so often they did.

There are in each of the vocations of art exceptional persons who diffuse happiness and win affection. Mrs. Gilbert was one of them. Wherever she became known she was not only admired but loved. Her acting delighted everybody who saw it,—equally the many who

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do not examine acting but merely perceive it, and the few who analyze it. Character, humor, piquancy of spirit, and flexibility and finish of execution were among the salient components of her art, but deeply interfused with all the attributes of that art there was a charm of personality, keenly felt but not easy to define. She was strongly individual and delightfully genuine. Her auditors became her friends. Those persons to whom she was intimately known discerned the reason for this in her pleasing eccentricity, sturdy independence, inveterate resolution, and dauntless courage, combined with integrity, a sensitive, sympathetic temperament, a kind heart, and gentle, winning manners. She was not only one of the most accomplished of dramatic performers; she was one of the noblest and sweetest of women.

Mrs. Gilbert's maiden name was Hartley. Her mother's maiden name was Colbourne. Her father, Samuel Hartley, was a printer. She was born in Rochdale, Lancashire, England, on October 21, 1822. In childhood she was taken by her parents to London, and there

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she was trained as a dancer, in which capacity, when about twelve years old, she began her stage career at the King's Theatre, in the Haymarket,—the house which was renamed Her Majesty's in 1837 after Victoria became Queen. Seventy years on the stage! Many thousand theatregoers of the present treasure performances of Mrs. Gilbert as things almost of yesterday; few, I fancy, realize that she was dancing for a living before young Victoria ascended the throne of England. In 1847 she became the wife of George H. Gilbert, with whom, after two years of dancing in the English provincial theatres, she emigrated to America, landing in New York, October 21, 1849, and going at once into what was then the Far West,—the State of Wisconsin. Her early experience of the American Theatre was gained chiefly in Milwaukee, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Louisville. In 1864 she came to New York; in 1869 she joined Daly's company, with which she remained associated till its disruption, on the death of that manager, in 1899, and the remainder of her professional career, ending

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only with her life, was passed under the management of the late Charles Frohman (1860-1915): she died, suddenly, in the old Sherman House, Chicago, on December 2, 1904.

In the days when I began playgoing in New York, fifty-six years ago (continuing a custom begun when, in boyhood, I used to scare up a quarter, by any labor I could do, and repair to the gallery of the old Museum, in Boston), the superlative "old woman" of the Stage was Mrs. George Vernon (Jane Marchant Fisher); and a charming lady she was, and a delightful actress. I had not seen any player who was her equal in such parts as *Temperance,* in "The Country Squire," and *Mrs. Hardcastle,* in "She Stoops to Conquer," and if any person then had told me that she would be surpassed, or even equalled, in her line, I should have deemed the statement ridiculous. I lived to see her best performances excelled by those of Mrs. Gilbert. I saw Mrs. Gilbert for the first time on September 19, 1864, at the Olympic Theatre, New York, when, making her first appearance in the capital, she acted a minor

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part, *Baroness Freitenhosen,* in a farcical comedy by the Countess of Gifford (Mrs. Dufferin, the poet who wrote "I'm sittin' on the stile, Mary"), called "Finesse." The Olympic (the second theatre of that name in New York, the first having been Mitchell's Olympic) was then in the control of Mrs. John Wood,—that most joyous and dazzling of female comedians, that incarnation of frolic. Mrs. Gilbert's first appearance here did not attract special notice. Later I saw her as *Mrs. Gamp,* as *Betsy Trotwood,* and as *Mrs. Wilfer,*—all characters from Dickens. In all of them she was true to the originals. As *Betsy Trotwood* she was perfection.

One of the most brilliant successes of her earlier professional life was gained by her perfect impersonation of the aristocratic, formidable *Marquise de St. Maur,* given at George Wood's Broadway Theatre, August 5, 1867, when Robertson's comedy of "Caste" was first introduced to the American Stage, by the comedian Florence. An extraordinary achievement of her later career was the wonderful impersona-

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tion of *Hester Dethridge,*—in a play based on the great novel of "Man and Wife," by Wilkie Collins,—a furtive, stealthy, gliding type of secretive insanity, which she suffused with a fearfully sinister spirit, evincing rare power of imagination. Her range of parts was exceptionally wide, for she acted with equal facility the *Widow Warren,* in "The Love Chase"; *Mrs. Malaprop,* in "The Rivals," and *Miss Garth.* The sagacious, peremptory, satirical matron,—a combination of domestic martinet and moral regulator, wide awake to the foibles of truant husbands and the pranks of mischievous young persons,—was consummately personated by Mrs. Gilbert, who therein assumed a character absolutely antagonistic to her own.

Mrs. Gilbert had known hardship and had not forgotten it. She was ever practically charitable. Her intelligence was alert, her perception keen, and she kept pace with every movement of thought and enterprise that was proceeding around her. She was not free from trouble, but she was reticent; she kept her sadness to herself and looked on the world with

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a smile. Her gayety was spontaneous, and it was exhilarating. To be in company with her was always to be cheered. One of the merriest times that I recall was a week passed in the hospitable city of Dublin in 1888 when, every day, I had the pleasure of an excursion with Mrs. Gilbert and Ada Rehan to visit places of interest in the storied Irish capital. Together we saw the birthplace of the poet Moore; the birthplace of Wellington; the time-worn pulpit in which Dean Swift preached, in St. Patrick's Cathedral (it had been laid on its side, as an old piece of lumber); the inscriptions marking the tombs of the gloomy Dean and his "Stella"; the antiquities of Trinity College; the scene,—Thomas Street,—of the betrayal and capture of that romantic patriot, Lord Edward Fitzgerald; and many other notable scenes and relics. Great was Mrs. Gilbert's delight when, in Glasnevin,—whither we had gone to see the monuments commemorative of Curran, Grattan, and O'Connell,—I was blandly deceived by the genial Hibernian guide to whom I had given a liberal tip, unguardedly asking him to

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direct us to the tomb of Sir Richard Steele. "Up that way," he said, pointing north, "and a grand one it is." I had forgotten that Glasnevin is a modern necropolis, and that gay Sir Richard died in Wales and was entombed there, early in the eighteenth century. We explored Glasnevin in vain, in quest of that "grand" sepulchre of the merry, gentle humorist, and I can still hear Mrs. Gilbert's laughter when suddenly I remembered the fact of his burial elsewhere, and realized the guide's ready duplicity.

NIGHTS IN "THE WOFFINGTON ROOM."

It was one of Daly's customs to assemble friends around him, toward twelve o'clock on the last night of the year, at a supper in what he called "The Woffington Room" in his theatre, and it was often my privilege to be one of his guests. Mrs. Gilbert was always one of the most distinguished of the company, impressing by the gentleness, grace, and native dignity of her demeanor, charming by her sweetness of feeling and her blithe conversation, and delight-

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From a Photograph by Sarony *Author's Collection*

MRS. G. H. GILBERT

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ing by her exquisite, old-fashioned, high-bred courtesy. Once Joseph Jefferson came, and Mrs. Gilbert was seated beside him at the table, —a combination and a contrast delightful to see. Both their faces were bright with keen intelligence and sweetly smiling humor, and when Jefferson playfully spoke of the pleasure it would be to act with her it was amusing to observe how instantaneously each of them assumed a different facial expression and a quaint, homely manner,—the brilliant comedian turning toward the brilliant actress and exclaiming in the comic voice of the half-frozen, self-important *Grumio:* "A fire, good Curtis,—prithee, cast on no water!" and the "old woman" promptly replying, in the brusque tones of *Curtis:* "There's fire ready! How near is our master?"

Mrs. Gilbert was remarkable, even to the last day of her life, for mental vigor and a youthful, blithe spirit. As Dr. Holmes so happily wrote, "Time spares the pyramids and Dejazet." She never grew old; she would not surrender to age. She was amusing and some-

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times, unconsciously, a little pathetic in her politely blunt resentment of any intimation that perhaps she might require attention or assistance. I remember the look of surprise that she turned upon me when I offered to assist her to enter a New York street-car. She keenly appreciated every mark of respect and kindness, but she sturdily insisted on being as brisk as the youngest and able to care for herself on all occasions. The designation "Grandma" was first given to Mrs. Gilbert by Daly, who also sometimes called her "Nan." A play called "Granny" was written for her use, by the late Clyde Fitch. The plan that she should make a farewell starring tour, in a play called "Grandma," was first suggested to her by my son, Mr. Jefferson Winter, more than two years earlier. The part that she acted in it, *Mrs. Emerson,* was the last in which she ever appeared. Her last performance of it was given December 1, 1904, at Powers's Theatre, Chicago. She died the next day.

The professional career of Mrs. Gilbert is inseparably associated with that of James

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Lewis, and to think of the one is, inevitably, to think of the other. Lewis was a native of Troy, N. Y.,—born about 1838: he was secretive about his age and would never tell me the date. "It was long after *you* were born," he said, but I believe 1838 was the year,—or close to it. He chose theatrical employment and went on the stage in boyhood, making his way as best he could, in theatres in the western part of the State of New York. I first saw him at the Olympic Theatre in 1865, when he made his first appearance in the metropolis, September 18, acting in "Your Life's in Danger." At that time and later he was recognized as remarkably clever in burlesque. From the Olympic he went to a theatre known, for a short time, as Lina Edwin's, in the building, in Broadway, which had been Dr. Samuel R. Osgood's church, and while acting there he particularly attracted the attention of Daly, and he was among the first of the actors engaged by Daly when beginning theatrical management, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in Twenty-fourth Street, in 1869. After that, as long as Daly maintained a com-

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pany (a period of thirty years, except for one brief interval) Lewis was a member of it, and he and Mrs. Gilbert gradually became associated in contrasted characters of regular or eccentric comedy. They first acted together under Mrs. Wood's management at the Olympic in,—"by the near guess of my memory,"—a fairy piece called "The Sleeping Beauty."

THE COMEDIAN IN PRIVATE LIFE.

The qualities in Lewis which impressed me most were simplicity, sincerity, quizzical dry humor, and kindness. Many actors are addle-headed by egotism and insufferable because of affectation. Lewis was delightfully genuine. He knew that he was a fine actor and he respected and esteemed his talents, but he was free from conceit. "All the world's a stage," no doubt, but the Stage is not all the world, and it would be a more agreeable world for persons who must know them and think about them if actors would recognize that truth and behold themselves in rational proportion with the rest of mankind. In social intercourse I found Lewis

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amiable, interesting, occasionally serious, but more often inclined to mirth. As a rule the comedian, in private life, is grave, pensive, even melancholy. John T. Raymond, exuberantly comic when acting, and seemingly cheerful in company with other persons, was gloomy when he thought himself unobserved. George Fox, the merriest and funniest of clowns, was sombre and silent when off the stage. It is an old story, but a true and good one, that when the sportive Grimaldi applied for medical advice to a physician who did not know him and who perceived him to be suffering from melancholia he was told to go to the theatre and "see Grimaldi." It is not invariably so, and doubtless the reaction from strenuous simulation of mirth partially explains such instances of gravity or gloom. I believe, however, that Lewis was a graver man than his admirers in general supposed him to be.

I remember an evening when he and I, among others, chanced to be guests of Daly at the manager's residence in New York, and happened to be alone together in the library, and

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when, after a few minutes' silence, Lewis looked at me very earnestly, extended his hand, and with much feeling said: "You and I, Willy, have been friends for many years, but I never yet told you how much I prize your friendship." There were tears in his eyes as he spoke.

I have gradually learned, from the tone of numerous contemporary publications, especially about the Theatre (publications which, it would seem, are directed by persons firmly convinced that nothing of substantial importance was ever accomplished in the world anterior to the happy hour when they arrived to take charge of it), that swift condemnation awaits the impious wretch who utters anything but worship of the beatific Present Day. Nevertheless, being inured to condemnation, I will venture to state that within about the last twenty years success on the American Stage has, more frequently than ever before, been obtained by means widely distinct from artistic achievement; by advertising expedients, such as are employed to promote the sale of chewing gum or pickles, rather than by intrinsic merit. No actor could be found

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to-day competent to fill the place of Lewis. Indeed, a more conscientious, thorough, scrupulously fastidious artist has not been known in our time. His death was precipitated by the feverish anxiety and incessant nervous strain which attended his preparation for the arduous part of *Falstaff*, in a revival of "King Henry IV." that Daly had arranged to effect at his theatre in the season of 1896-'97. As an example of artistic coöperation,—the ability and willingness to "play together" for the right effect of every scene,—I recall nothing finer, in more than sixty years of theatregoing, than Joseph Jefferson and W. J. Florence as *Acres* and *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, in "The Rivals," and Mrs. Gilbert and James Lewis in the Daly comedies.

LEWIS'S PERSONAL TRAITS.

Lewis's personal peculiarities were many and marked. He was extremely neat and particular in his habits in the theatre, and almost as regular in them as a cat. His preferred seat in Daly's Green Room,—a seat for which gener-

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ally he would ask, if he happened to find it already occupied,—was just at the right of one of the large mirrors in that room, where he could not see his reflection in the glass, and frequently he would sit almost squatting, with his feet drawn up beside him on the narrow plush-covered bench. Indeed, that position he generally occupied when weary. I have seen him so seated in a moving railway train (for it happened to me to make several journeys in his company),—as a rule riding backward,—and I noticed that when the train passed a line of freight cars his lips would move very rapidly, as though he were gabbling to himself in a whisper. Once I inquired: "What is it you do, James, when we rush by other cars,—pray for a safe deliverance, or curse the noise?" "I *add*," he replied. "Add?" I asked; "add what?" "Why, the numbers on the freight cars," he answered; "19878 equals twenty-eight, but you've got to be quick to catch 'em all when you're moving and there is a long string. It's a great mental exercise." He cherished many of the superstitions peculiar to actors. The utterance of a

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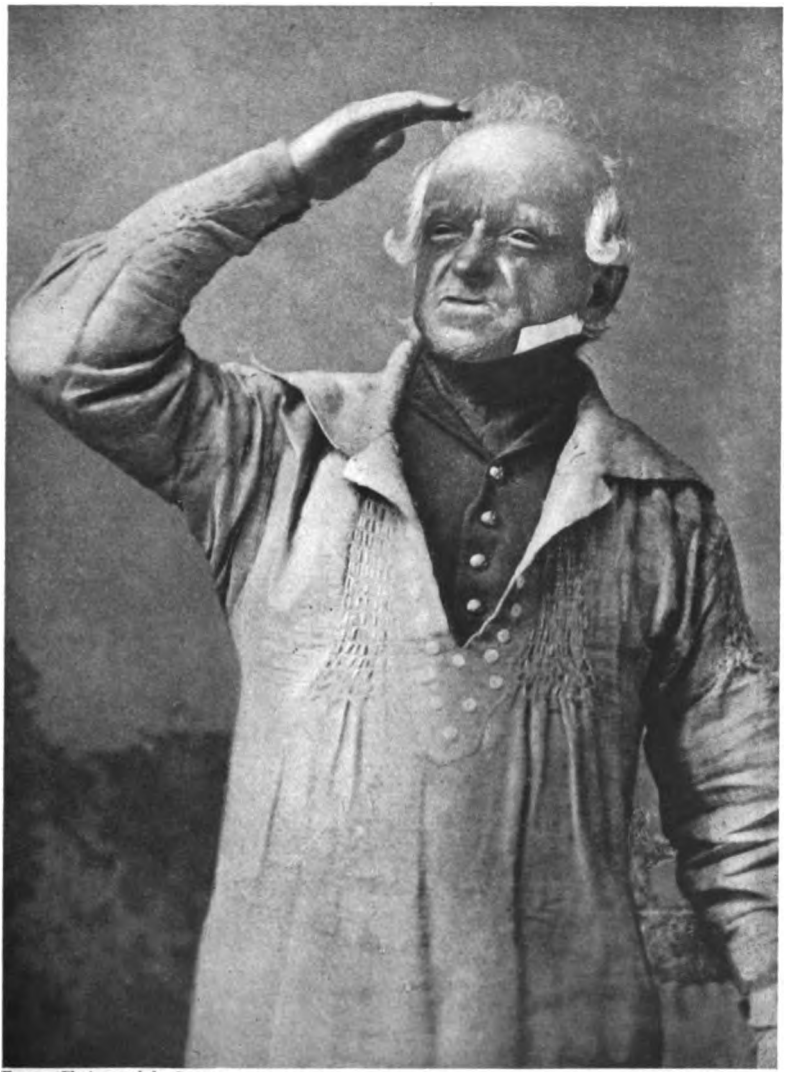

From a Photograph by Sarony *Author's Collection*

JAMES LEWIS

As *Gunnion*, in "The Squire"

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quotation from "Macbeth" would cause him to leave silently any room in the theatre; he would not speak the "tag" to any play; and I believe that if a visitor had ventured to whistle in his dressing room, amiable though the comedian was, he would have assaulted that sinful person. A certain way to excite him to satirical ire was to refer in his hearing to a theatrical company as a "troupe."

In appearance, while not grotesque, Lewis was peculiar. His figure was below the middle height and slender, but straight and wiry; his facial aspect was sedate, genial, and pleasant; his eyes, which slightly protruded, were blue, and were bright and "snappy" in expression; his nose was long and thin; his mouth large, with thin lips; his voice was high and incisive, and his utterance was clear, sharp, and effective; his hair was of a sandy color and thin; his hands were slender and delicate; his feet were extremely small and well shaped, and he was proud of them, and there was no more certain way to exasperate him than to touch them; he moved lightly, quickly, and

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with grace, and he possessed the quality which the old actors called "gig,"—the faculty to suffuse his personations with exhilarating animation. His dress was notable for scrupulous neatness. He was not an exquisite in costume, but every article of clothing that he wore was tasteful and becoming. Though serious in temperament he was playful in conversation, perceiving quickly the comic side of things and making apt, quizzical comment on them. He was a bright and gentle spirit; he gave innocent happiness to thousands, and of him it might well have been written, as it was (by the eccentric humorist Peacock) of the imagined *Sir Peter:*

> "He kept at true good-humor's mark
> The social flow of Pleasure's tide:
> He never made a brow look dark
> Or caused a tear, but when he died."

The death of any person who has been prominent in public life customarily elicits ebullient expressions of eulogy which are about as significant as the empty air. It is only now and then,

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and from exceptional sources, that an obitual word possesses both intelligence and sincerity. Daly seldom said anything about his feelings, and never said anything except exactly what he meant. His favorable estimation, accordingly, was substantial and worth having, because it was the sensible, honest thought of a clear-sighted observer, cold and stern in judgment, and of large worldly experience. When Lewis died Daly wrote to me a letter which, coming from such a man, reveals an exceptional warmth of earnest feeling, such as could have proceeded only out of assured knowledge of the worth of the friend whom he had lost: and as an interesting touch in this pen picture I place it here:

"Daly's Theatre, New York,
"September 11, 1896.

"Dear Winter:—

"It is almost a paralyzing blow—this taking off of Lewis. However, as we survived the going off of Drew, I suppose Time will help us to get over this. Thank God, Ada Rehan is still spared to us! When she is no longer here, I shall retire,—unless God elects to take me first. But Lewis was such a dear and lovable

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and most loyal man—beyond all his great worth as an actor: and as associate and friend I shall miss him as greatly as in other ways, above all others, except dear Mrs. Gilbert, and her who is ever and ever above all others in my thought and hope and pride—Ada Rehan.

"Sincerely,

"AUGUSTIN DALY."

TWO DEDICATIONS.

I dedicated two of my books to Augustin Daly —"Gray Days and Gold," as first published, in 1891, and "Ada Rehan—A Study." The latter was first published in 1890, with the supplementary title of "A Daughter of Comedy," and, revised, augmented, and rewritten, was issued again in 1898. The dedication of "Gray Days" is in these words:

To

AUGUSTIN DALY

Remembering a Friendship

of Many Years

I Dedicate This Book

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" Est animus tibi
Rerumque prudens, et secundis
Temporibus dubiisque rectus."[1]

[1] *" In thy mind thou conjoinest life's practical knowledge,*
And a temper unmoved by the changes of fortune,
Whatsoever her smile or her frown,
Neither bowed nor elate,—but erect."
LORD LYTTON'S TRANSLATION.

Daly wrote to me the following letter, soon after seeing the first copies of that book:

"Daly's, New York,
"January 24, 1891.

"My dear Winter:—

"I have had copies of both books sent to *nearly* all on the lists you gave me. David Douglas certainly will get his copies, and Mrs. Moulton.

"Your graceful dedicatory lines for 'Gray Days and Gold' touch me deeply. I have none but happy memories of the days of our friendship—it is a shame that we did not come closer together long years before.

"I hope you'll come in soon again to see 'The School for Scandal'—it runs on delightfully now—and has made a most tremendous hit,—nothing since 'The Taming of the Shrew' has touched it in crowds.

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"If you are not engaged for Sunday, February 15, I want you to dine with me that evening. More of this subject later.

"Sincerely,

"A. D."

"Ada Rehan" is dedicated in these words—and no tribute was ever more richly deserved than that earnestly, if not adequately, intimated in the verses that close it:

To
AUGUSTIN DALY
Whose Discernment Early Recognized in
ADA REHAN
The Promise of a Great Career
And Whose Judgment and Skill
As a Theatrical Manager
Were Wisely and Generously Exerted
To Guide Her Progress
And
To Promote Her Fortunes
I Dedicate This Commemorative Record
Of Her Professional Life.

By Friendship prompted, gentle and sincere,
Kindness inspires the Tribute written here.
Detraction might some trivial fault disclose,
Exultant o'er a blemish in the rose;

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Mine be the joy her beauties to proclaim,
And give to distant years her noble fame;
And since so long thy zeal has serv'd her cause,
And arm'd her will to win the world's applause,
Be it my proud prerogative to twine,
Old friend and true, her honor'd name with thine.
W. W.

Daly, I remember, wrote to me a charming letter about this, but, alas, like so many others, 'tis gone and comes not back. I find a comfort in dwelling on recollections of Daly: he had faults—and he never lacked for censurers to point them out!—but he was a *man:* the longer he is dead the larger his shadow grows: he was tremendously in earnest and entirely sincere. His letters, often not more than notes, are strikingly characteristic, and they seem, in the reading, to bring him back before me, and I see again the clear, fine eyes, the slow, half-quizzical smile, and hear the low, strong tones I knew so well.

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CHARACTERISTIC LETTERS.

"Tremont House,
"Chicago, June 15, 1884.

"My dear Winter:—

". . . We sail on July 5, in the Alaska,—arriving in the city the night before. Those who go with me will be Mr. Lewis, Mr. Drew, Mr. Leclercq, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Skinner, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Gilbert, Miss Fielding, Miss Dreher, Miss Irwin, and Miss Rehan. We shall open at Toole's Theatre on Saturday evening, July 19, in '7-20-8.' I hope to produce 'Needles and Pins,' 'Dollars and Sense,' 'She Would and She Would Not,' and 'The Country Girl,' before our brief season of six weeks expires.

"I have tried to avoid the blatant, undignified methods most managers from America have made use of to announce their wares in England. In this, I think you will bear me witness I have only continued the rule I always pursued here.

"One fact I wish you would emphasize for me. That my style of management has not been an imitation of any one else's. That precision of detail, luxury, completeness of surroundings, and general unity of company and performance,—which was found so fascinat-

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From a Photograph *Courtesy of Miss Ada Rehan*

DALY'S FAMOUS OFFICE, IN HIS THEATRE IN NEW YORK

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ing in Irving's performances, was inaugurated by me in 1869, ten years before Irving began his career as manager.

"You may remember some elaborate revivals I made of 'Twelfth Night,' of 'The Merry Wives,' of 'As You Like It,' of 'Love's Labor's Lost,' of 'The School for Scandal,' and—but I will suggest nothing. Your own memories and good-will will do me *justice*.

"Sincerely,

"AUGUSTIN DALY."

"Paris, France, September 7, 1895.

"Dear Winter:—

"I have read in time past that Paris was a sort of Hell. Our experience of the past few days has proven the approximate correctness of those reports. I have never felt such heat, outside the torrid tortures of the alkali plains *en route* to San Francisco, under an August sun.

"We return to London Tuesday. I hope to see you that day at the theatre. Call at one o'clock and let us have a bite and a chat together.

"Ada and Mrs. Daly have suffered greatly from the heat. I have simply smiled to think that the Americans whom I found here all agree in giving the palm

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(as usual) to Paris, over their own country: this time, however, to the credit of the U. S. A.!

"Sincerely,

"A. D."

TEMPER AND PECULIARITIES.

Notwithstanding his intrinsic amiability (which had been considerably strained by ingratitude and disparagement), Daly was a man of irascible temper,—a defect which he earnestly strove to repair. "It is a serious weakness," he said to me, and then added: "Some time ago a swindling workman sent me an unjust bill, which I have repeatedly refused to pay. He has annoyed me much. To-day I met him in Sixth Avenue, where a new building is going up. 'Are you going to pay me that money?' he demanded. His insolence infuriated me so that I snatched up a piece of scantling, but, thank Heaven, he ran before I could strike. I might have killed him."

As a stage-manager Daly's chief if not his only fault was a practice of excessive interference with his actors. His knowledge of the

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technicalities of dramatic art, indeed, was ample and minute, and he possessed an unerring perception of dramatic effect, so that his insistence on his own way was measurably justified. To inexperienced performers his training was exceedingly serviceable, and he could, and often did, make valuable suggestions to even the most experienced and capable of actors: but sometimes he marred individual performances by checking spontaneity and suppressing originality, and sometimes also he wrought injustice by arbitrary forbiddance of the right and proper exaltation of a character. His company was subservient to rigorous discipline, and it presented an admirable model of concurrent acting, but frequently it worked under a painful nervous tension, which could not be otherwise than injurious, at least to some individuals. Few of his company were truly friendly to him, but every member of it possessed of judgment and knowledge admired and respected him. He watched his company with the vigilance of a hawk, both in the theatre and out of it. He specially disliked the vulgar and odious habit,

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indulged in by some actors, of making Broadway a lounging place in which to pose and exhibit themselves and to gossip. He detested those supersensitive creatures of "feeling" (almost invariably incompetent to act) who cannot properly attend to their business at rehearsal. "Don't tell me you'll be 'all right at night'!" I once heard him exclaim, to an actor on his stage: "If there's anything I *hate,* it's that! If you're *ever* going to be 'all right' you can be 'all right' *now!*" One maxim, of which he warmly approved, he caused to be printed and displayed in various parts of his theatre, behind the scenes, where, probably, the admonition in it did good service: "A sure way to success—mind your business. A sure way to happiness—mind *your own* business." He was an insistent, merciless worker. He habitually rose at six in the morning, he was in the theatre at eight, and except for an hour at noon, which he passed at home, he remained there till midnight. He sometimes worked all night with his pen, at such times drinking cold tea as a stimulant. His favorite wine was sherry, but

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he drank very little, at any time, and he never used tobacco.

Daly's personal peculiarities were many and striking. He was unusually tall, but he sacrificed some of the appearance of height by reason of an habitual stoop. His limbs were long and thin. He customarily dressed in black clothes, and, like many old-time Southerners (he was a native of Plymouth, N. C., of Irish extraction, born July 20, 1838), he wore high-heeled boots, the tops of which extended up, under his trouser legs, almost to the knees. He was exceedingly nervous, and when seated, at rehearsal, he had a trick of twining one leg around the other and then, unknowingly, of working one boot half off. When in that position, if anything occurred, in the business of the scene, which he desired to alter, he would attempt to rise and, in consequence of his pedal entanglement, would violently propel himself through the air like a spiral spring, unwinding, —to the great, if secret, joy of the assembled company. His hands were slender and fine,— almost as expressive as those of Henry Irving,

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—but as, in the theatre, he was almost continually seizing pieces of scenery or furniture and pushing and pulling them this way and that, they were often so begrimed as not to seem so. His eyes were extraordinarily beautiful,—blue-gray in color, large, with long and dark, characteristically Irish lashes. His forehead was broad and expressive of intellect. His voice was musical and strong, but, ordinarily, it was imperious. In expostulatory speaking he had a trick of swinging one clenched hand from the level of his chest, sidewise, down, and backward to arm's length, drooping his jaw and uttering his words with a sort of drawl. In social conversation he spoke simply and earnestly, but he was not a talker. He was an excellent reader. When he read a play to his company,—as in the earlier part of his managerial career he did, in the case of almost every play he produced, —he elucidated the full meaning of the text, made every character visible and comprehensible, and indicated the stage business suitable to each person and scene. Before a public audience he was constrained. He could not deliver public

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speeches, and when called before the curtain he contented himself with a few murmured words and a bow.

A DISCOMFITED MIMIC.

Like other persons of original and distinctive individuality, Daly was a good subject for mimicry or comic caricature. The farceur Mr. William Collier, at one time call-boy at Daly's Theatre, early manifested a propensity to mimic personal peculiarities, and he was accustomed to give an imitation of Daly's voice and manner so exact that, as James Lewis (who told the following story to me) declared, even a blind man could not fail to see it. Lewis and John Drew were being regaled with this imitation one evening, in Daly's Green Room, when Collier was surprised to notice that their laughter had suddenly subsided into serious silence. Looking up, he found Daly standing close by and gazing at him earnestly, with an expression of mild disapproval. "Willy," said the manager, "I can't have you giving these imitations of yours of distinguished people; no, my boy, you

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mustn't do it; why, the first thing I know, you might try to give an imitation of *me*." And, so saying, he gravely walked away.

AS A DRAMATIST.

Daly began to write plays in boyhood, and his brother Joseph has told me that he was accustomed to produce them, at home, and that even then he was a strict, peremptory stage manager. He possessed both the dramatic instinct and the faculty of dramatic construction. He saw the persons in a story as living human beings, and he could make a story tell itself in action, so as to cause a series of cumulative effects. His early plays produced in New York were somewhat crude in dialogue, but in his maturity his dramas,—some of them original, others adapted,—evidenced felicity of invention, dexterity of construction, a nimble fancy, knowledge of human nature, and a remarkably acute perception of the spirit of the time in which he lived and of what was going on around him.

One of the earliest of his successful plays was

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the melodrama called "Under the Gaslight," in which an ingenious expedient, at once dramatic and mechanical, is employed for the creation of a startling stage effect. He once told me under what circumstances he hit upon this device. His residence, at that time, was on the East Side of New York. He was walking home, toward night, thinking intently about the play which he had begun to write, and being completely preoccupied, when suddenly the crowning expedient occurred to him and at the same instant he stumbled over a misplaced flagstone, striking his right foot against the edge of the stone and sustaining a severe hurt. "I was near my door," he said, "and I rushed into the house, threw myself into a chair, grasping my injured foot with both hands, for the pain was great, and exclaiming, over and over again, 'I've got it! I've got it! And it beats *hot irons* all to pieces!" My people thought I must be out of my mind. I wasn't even thinking of the hurt. I had thought of having my hero tied on a railroad track and rescued by his sweetheart, just in the nick of time, before the swift

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passage of an express train across a dark stage; and what I meant was that this would surpass the scene in 'Rosedale' [a play then very popular] in which the gypsy proposes to blind *Eliot Gray* with red-hot irons." The melodrama of "Under the Gaslight" is still sometimes acted. The rescue scene may seem trite now: then it was entirely novel. Dion Boucicault tried to "convey" Daly's invention of the railroad scene, in a play called "After Dark," but he was legally restrained from stealing it.

"DARKNESS AND NIGHT AND THE END OF THE PLAY."

In later years Daly had begun to feel the loneliness that settles on the mind as friends die, and things change, and the long familiar environment drifts away, and the new age comes on. His active career had extended over nearly thirty years, and, as a rule, no person remains a much longer time than that conspicuously in the public eye. "My audience," he said to me, toward the last, "seems to be different from what it was. The people are new. I am grow-

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From a Photograph *Courtesy of Miss Ada Rehan*

AUGUSTIN DALY, ABOUT 1895

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ing weary of trying to please them." And then he spoke of plans, or, rather, dreams, we had sometimes entertained, of going abroad and settling in some quiet nook in rural England. I suppose he was dimly conscious of failing health and flagging energy. I do not believe, however, he would have been content to retire. He certainly did not expect the end, which came so suddenly. Death took him by surprise. He had not completed his sixty-first year when he passed away. He was a rare personality, the representative and greatest theatrical manager America has produced. He was not generally and rightly recognized in life, and he has received nothing like justice since his death. He could be irresistibly charming when he chose to be so,—blithe, gentle, affectionate,—but toward most persons he chose to be frigid. I remember him as genial, confiding, kind, outspoken, and sincere; and, more and more, as the years pass away, I see how great he was in his vocation and what a calamity the loss of him was for the American Stage.

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VII.

HENRY IRVING.

1838—1905.

"I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise."

ORIGINALITY and force of character, commanding intellect, probity, and steadfast will constitute the basis of the success that attended Henry Irving as a man and as an actor. He was born and reared in obscurity and poverty. He did not, at the beginning, possess any social advantages, but he was conscious of the possession of innate powers; he formed, in boyhood, the resolve to make his way to a high position in the world of art, and that resolve he fulfilled, —notwithstanding many obstacles,—by virtue of his genius, inherent strength, and patient, resolute continuity of purpose. He would have succeeded in any intellectual vocation as well

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as he succeeded in the vocation of actor. His mind was many-sided, and it was animated by lofty, ceaseless aspiration. In choosing the theatre as the vehicle of his expression and the implement of his labor he chose according to the bent of his genius, and his choice proved fortunate, equally for society and himself. At first, and for a long time, he encountered an opposition which, in some instances, amounted to positive enmity, nor was there any period in the whole of his long career when the voice of detraction relative to his acting became entirely silent. His life was one of incessant toil and of almost incessant conflict; yet if it was perplexed by care and clouded by trouble it also was glorified by victory and irradiated by happiness. One day, in 1885, when we were driving along by Hyde Park in London, he said to me: "I would rather have *ten years* of *life* than fifty years of mere existence." He *lived* all the days of his life, and I doubt whether, in all the long annals of the ministry of art, any man is named who more completely fulfilled his ambition and accomplished his fate.

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MRS. PENBERTHY,—"A REMARKABLE WOMAN."

Irving's family name was Brodribb; his Christian name was John. He was born in the village of Keinton-Mandeville, Somersetshire, England, on February 6, 1838. The name of Henry Irving was adopted by him when he went on the stage, in 1856, and in 1870 he obtained from the British Parliament legal sanction for the use of it. In childhood Irving was left by his parents,—who had found it necessary to seek their fortune in London,—in the care of his mother's sister, Sarah Behenna, wife of Captain Isaac Penberthy, a miner, resident in Halseton, Cornwall, and there he lived for six years. On one of the many nights when it was my privilege to sit with him, in pleasant conversation about all sorts of things, he spoke much of his beloved aunt, Mrs. Penberthy, her goodness, simplicity, and resolute character, and the influence that her guardianship of his boyhood had exercised on his life. "She was a marvel of self-possession," he said, "and she could act in the most decisive manner": and then he

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mentioned a strikingly illustrative incident. "I was with her one day," he said, "walking across a moor, and she had her market basket and we were followed by her little pet dog, of which she was very fond. Two or three tipsy louts came along, with a large cur, and they persisted in setting that beast on her pet. She warned them to cease the annoyance, but they only laughed and jeered. At last, finding that they would not desist, she suddenly drew from her basket a long, sharp knife and stooping quickly, as the cur came, growling, within her reach, she seized him by the neck and ripped him open all along the belly, from end to end, and we went on our way, unmolested. She was a remarkable woman."

Captain Penberthy, his uncle, Irving said, was a man of uncommon stature and strength, kind, good-natured, sparing of speech, and pacific in his demeanor, but his temper was passionate, and when he drank spirits, as he sometimes did, he became irritable. On one occasion, having come home after an absence, in the mines, he chanced to find that his supper

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was not satisfactory, whereupon he became angry and vented his wrath by smashing several chairs in the living room; after which proceeding he left the house, and he did not return till the end of the next week. Mrs. Penberthy had neither moved nor spoken during her husband's outbreak of violence. When the captain appeared he was calm and gentle, and she received him pleasantly, without a word of reproach or any reference to his spasm of rage. The cottage was in order, neat and clean, the table was spread, but, as he looked around the room, Captain Penberthy saw, suspended on the four walls, every fragment of the furniture which he had broken.

"My dear aunt," Irving continued, "was remarkable, among even women of the highest rank and breeding, for innate dignity. She was absolutely simple. Her manner was perfect." And then he related that after he had become successful and distinguished in his profession he persuaded her to visit him in London, and to attend a performance at the Lyceum Theatre. She had never before entered a theatre and at

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first was reluctant to do so,—being pious, and having heard of the Theatre only as an "immoral" institution. "I persuaded her to come," he added, "and she expressed much satisfaction with what she saw. She also attended a reception on my stage, after the performance. Many fine ladies and many stately gentlemen were present, but my aunt proved to be one of the finest and stateliest of them all. Her self-possession was grand, her courtesy exquisite: she was honest, true, and right, and never failed in anything. I was proud of her and delighted with her."

BEST LOVED PARTS.

Irving was not educated,—in the generally accepted sense of that word. He attended school from 1849 to 1851, in London, but in the latter year he was taken from school and placed in a lawyer's office, as a clerk, and later in the counting room of a mercantile firm. Such training as he received for the stage,—toward which he early evinced a strong natural propensity,—was obtained from association with an

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"elocution club" and with theatrical performances by amateurs. He left the counting room in his eighteenth year, and he made his first appearance on the regular stage, September 18, 1856, at Sunderland, Durham, acting *Gaston, Duke of Orleans,* in the good old play of "Richelieu." From that day till the day of his death, —a period of more than forty-nine years,—he remained on the stage, and in the course of that time he played 671 parts, of certain record; and when thoughtful consideration is given to the broad range of characters through which he passed, the opulent resources of imagination and invention that he displayed, his superlative faculty of *impersonation,* and the incomparable variety and versatility of his artistic method, the belief seems warranted that,—in the fulness of his powers and at the summit of his career,—he was the greatest actor of whom there is any record. He certainly swayed the Stage throughout English-speaking countries as no other actor has ever swayed it. The scope of his professional achievement is indicated by the fact that he gave living, impressive, authorita-

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tive identity to such sharply contrasted characters as *Hamlet* and *Corporal Brewster, Macbeth* and *Alfred Jingle, Iago* and *Jeremy Diddler, Dr. Primrose* and *Bill Sikes, Shylock* and *Don Quixote, Cardinal Wolsey* and *Robert Macaire, King Richard the Third* and *King Charles the First, Malvolio* and *Benedick, Lesurques* and *Dubosc, Mathias* and *Becket, King Arthur* and *King Louis the Eleventh,* and *Mephistopheles* and *Eugene Aram.* The biographies of David Garrick record that he was equally true and supremely effective in *King Lear* and *Abel Drugger.* His range must have been great, but that of Irving, manifestly, was greater.

The parts in his repertory that Irving best loved were *Hamlet* and *Becket.* On one occasion, speaking to me of Fanny Kemble's reading of "Hamlet,"—which he described as hard, cold, and metallic,—he signified his feeling relative to the central character by the expressive designation "that sweet, gentle, *lovely* creature." The character of *Becket* he held in reverence. "Tennyson was inspired," he said, "when he

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wrote that part, and the inspiration descended on him straight from heaven"; and then, with tears, he repeated the passage about the wild fowl sitting, dead, upon her stone-cold eggs and "the mother love" that runs through all the world. One line from "Becket" was often on his lips: "Men are God's trees and women are God's flowers."

Irving's estimate of his acting was sincere, and, when occasion arose, was freely expressed. In conversation he would speak of his impersonations frankly and with childlike simplicity. He highly, and rightly, esteemed his embodiment of *Shylock*. "My *Shylock*," he said to me, "is the best that has ever been given." His performance of *Dr. Primrose*, the Vicar of Wakefield,—to my mind one of the most beautiful of dramatic achievements,—he did not value as I did; he thought there was "too much waiting" in it, that it did not enlist his full powers and keep him sufficiently occupied. In speaking of his much-commended personation of *Dubosc*, in "The Lyons Mail,"—a performance which I had told him appeared to me to

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be comparatively easy,—he said: "It *is* easy; all the *Bill Sikes* parts are easy." He dissented, in conversation with me, from the estimate which I had expressed of his wonderful assumption of *Mephistopheles*,—which, to me, seemed the inspired embodiment of heaven-defying audacity and wicked power. He valued it, but he valued other performances far more. After seeing many repetitions of his *Mephistopheles* and studying it with scrupulous care I found no reason to alter my opinion. He disliked *Corporal Brewster*. "Old age is often dreadfully selfish," he said, "and this old man is utterly so"; but he knew the excellence of his personation of the poor veteran of Waterloo, and he considered the pathos of that embodiment and the vivid, admonitive contrast of conditions which it affords a full justification for its presentment.

"THE BEST THING I EVER DID."

One of the few indecisions of Irving's professional life was shown in his treatment of the tragedy of "Julius Cæsar," a play which

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he several times resolved to produce and as often laid aside. "'Cymbeline,'" he told me, "except for *Imogen,* isn't worth a damn for the stage; neither is 'Coriolanus.'" We often discussed those subjects and many others, and I always had occasion to observe the penetrative intellect that he had applied to them, the intensity with which he had thought, and the thoroughness with which he had studied. It was impossible to be in Henry Irving's company without being aware of a great stimulant to the mind. He could give a reason for every conclusion he had reached as to the art of acting and for everything he had done in the exercise of it, and his reasons always were strong and commanded respect. "The best thing I ever did," he said to me, "was my performance of *King Lear.* They would not have it," he added, "but it was my greatest work. All around that play there in an awful atmosphere of danger—mystery—omen—whispering in corners—plotting by night—something terrible impending. My performance was *psychological,* and I know it was right. I wish you had seen it." The "paradox

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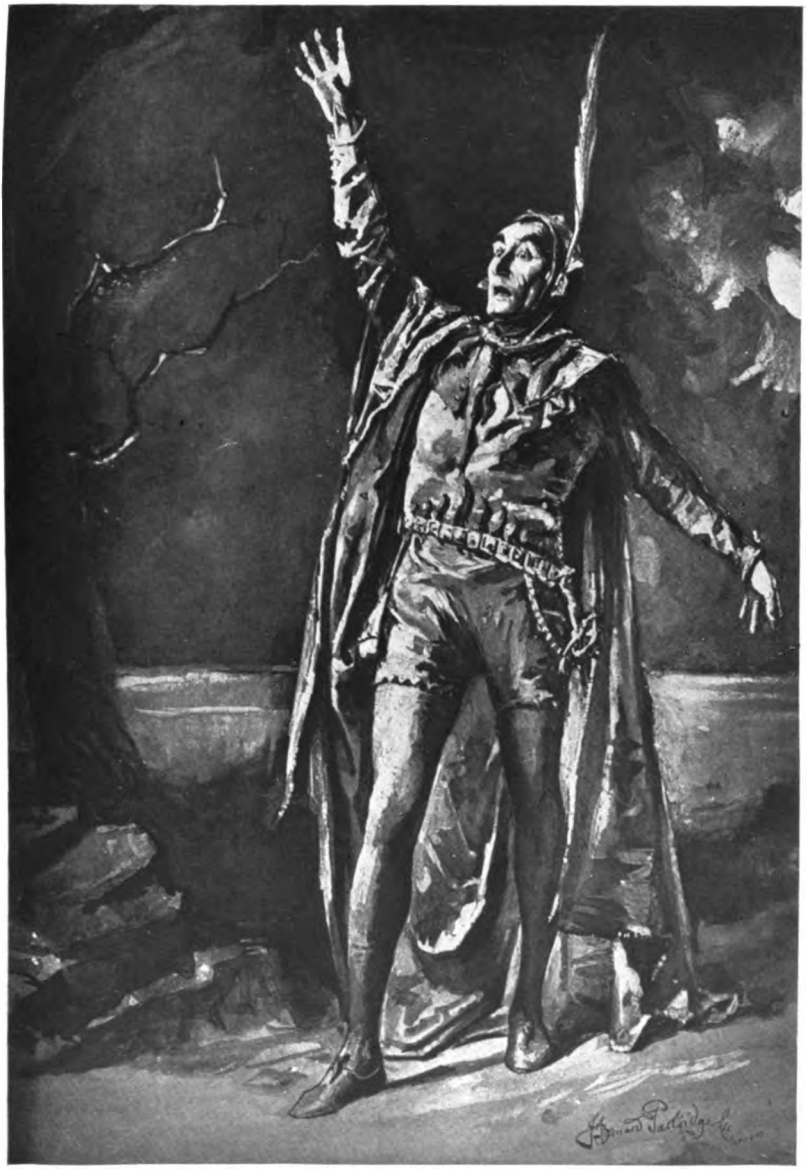

HENRY IRVING AS *MEPHISTOPHELES*, IN "FAUST"
AFTER THE DRAWING FROM LIFE, BY J. BERNARD PARTRIDGE

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of acting,"—the possession and display of great strength by a broken old man,—is apparent in *King Lear*. Irving played the part for the first time on November 10, 1892, at the London Lyceum, and it was generally accounted a failure. From all that he said to me, and from what I know of the play and the actor, I believe that if he were alive now, to act *King Lear*, his personation would receive public indorsement of his high estimate of it.

OUR FIRST MEETING.

At the time of my first meeting with Irving he had entered on his fortieth year. I was then making my first visit to England. It was on a rainy night, after a performance at one of the London theatres, and I had repaired to a rendezvous of genial spirits. The room was brightly lighted, and when I entered it, from the dark street and the dusky little stairway, my eyes were momentarily dazzled, but I saw a long table, covered with a snow-white cloth, on which were gleaming dishes and glasses, and I was aware of the presence of many

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persons. One of them, a tall, slender, handsome man, dressed in a negligent, elegant garb, including a jacket made of gray velvet, rose, came forward, and extended a hand of welcome. "I am glad to see you," he said; "I found the letter of introduction that you left at my lodging. All here are your friends. I am Henry Irving."

In those words the great actor greeted me, at a midnight hour, in the spring of 1877, at a cosey little club in King William Street, near Toole's Theatre, and in that way our acquaintance began,—an acquaintance which soon ripened into a friendship that never was broken, though it was interrupted twenty-eight years later by his death. I had been tendered the privileges of that club on motion of Toole and Bancroft, and that night I made my first visit to it, and then and later I found it one of the most charming of convivial resorts. I know not whether it still exists. Great changes have occurred in London within the last thirty-eight years. Bancroft, now a knight and retired from the stage, is still living, and is honored

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and loved. Two or three of those boon companions survive; but Toole, Irving, Clayton, David James, and the kindly Duke of Beaufort have passed away. The conversation, I remember, was gay and various. Toole was in high spirits. Irving was attentive, gracious, and gentle. Ever afterward, in all my knowledge of that fine spirit (and later, as years rolled by, it was my privilege to be with him many times and in many places, and to possess his affection and confidence), I never found any change in the lovely refinement and grace of his manner. If ever a man was born a prince, Henry Irving was that man. Such was my first impression of his personality, and subsequent observation of him abundantly confirmed it.

At the time of our first meeting, though his greatest popularity and power still lay before him, Irving's professional distinction was already extraordinary. He had stood the most severe critical test to which an actor can be subjected, having acted, in London, among other parts,—and besides *Mathias,* in "The Bells," and *King Charles the First,* which were

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great performances,—the superlatively exacting Shakespearean characters of *King Richard the Third, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth.* His acting, indeed, was a theme of controversy, as it always continued to be, but his genius had been recognized, his decisive excellence had been generally conceded, and his reputation was established. He was, at that time, acting *Lesurques* and *Dubósc,* in "The Lyons Mail," in which characters, and in them only, I had then seen and studied his acting. Later I saw him many times and in almost every part that he played after 1877. About seven years earlier it had been suggested to Edwin Booth by his brother-in-law, the comedian John S. Clarke, that he lease the London Lyceum and alternate between that house and Booth's Theatre in New York. That astute plan, after having been approved, was abruptly rejected by Booth, on an impulse of momentary annoyance, and a golden opportunity was lost. Not long afterward the Lyceum was leased by the American manager H. L. Bateman, who opened it on September 11, 1871, presenting his daughter,

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Isabella Bateman, as *Fanchette,* in "Fanchon," —Henry Irving acting *Landry Barbeau.* Bateman had seen Irving in Albery's comedy of "The Two Roses," had taken a fancy to his acting, and had engaged him as a member of the company assembled to support his daughter. That engagement proved the turning point in Irving's career, and though his great success was, fundamentally, the consequence of what he was and what he did, it is a pleasant remembrance for Americans that it was an American who first practically recognized that actor's genius and gave him opportunity when opportunity was most essential to his advancement.

H. L. BATEMAN.

H. L. Bateman (his given names, which he did not like, were Hezekiah Linthicum) was a native of Maryland, born on the east shore of that state. More than fifty-five years ago I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance. He was then managing a theatrical company, headed by Matilda Heron and Charles Walter

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Couldock, presenting his wife's play of "Geraldine," and a little later he brought forward, at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, his daughter, Kate Bateman (now the wife of Dr. George Crowe, of Bristol, England), as the heroine of a pastoral play, by Mrs. Bateman, based on Longfellow's poem of "Evangeline." Bateman was a formidable power in the world of the Theatre. He was acquainted with the vicissitudes of fortune, yet he seldom failed in any enterprise upon which his heart was set. He brought Opera Bouffe to America. He brought over Mme. Parepa Rosa, and thus made our public acquainted with one of the true queens of song. About the beginning of the American Civil War he shifted the scene of his activities to England. He was a man of interesting character, indomitable energy, and boundless enthusiasm. His talents as an actor were respectable. He went on the stage, in the West, when young, and he was intimately associated with it for more than thirty years. As a theatrical manager he was sagacious, versatile, and expeditious. Into whatever enter-

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prise he undertook he projected himself with tremendous zeal. His geniality of temperament made him a charming comrade, but in theatrical business his passionate ardor and his absolute belief in himself and in the consummate excellence of his plays and actors often made him ludicrously dictatorial. At times he was harsh and hard in his dealings, and he made enemies when in the mood of the tyrant. But the enmities did not last long. There was something almost comic in the fervency and the resolute purpose of that earnest worker. It was not difficult to set the twinkle of suppressed mirth in the flashing eyes of that seemingly ferocious Boanerge, with his shaggy iron-gray hair and his warlike voice. He could easily lapse into laughter and melt into tears. His stories were of the merriest order. His song was jovial. He had a kind heart and a liberal hand. It was his aggressive personality and his craze for some work of selfish devotion that made him sometimes fierce. As an actor he displayed efficiency, with no especial bent of aptitude or brilliancy of performance. The

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last parts that he played were the *Bard,* in "Geraldine," and the stern father, in Thomas Blades De Walden's play of "Rosa Gregorio." He is not remembered as an actor, but his name is bright in the memories of a few survivors of an older time, and it will hold a place in the history of the Stage,—to which he contributed more than one ornament, and on which he helped to rear more than one honorable reputation. He was a man of such extraordinary vitality that everybody who knew him received the news of his death with painful surprise. He was one of those iron men who are expected, with universal concurrence, to outlive all their companions.

One evening, in 1860, when Kate Bateman was acting *Evangeline,* I met a comrade, Charles Dawson Shanly, in the lobby, and we turned toward the door. Bateman saw us and rapidly approached,—his blue eyes sparkling and his hands clutching his thick, curly, yellow hair. "Where are you two going?" he said: "Don't you know the curtain is up?" Shanly raised his right hand, in the manner of

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a school boy: "Please, Mr. Bateman," he murmured, "may we go out for a drink?" Our name for Bateman, in those Bohemian days, was "Chain-Lightning," and, in his impetuosity of temper, he deserved it. In his explosive ardor he was radically eccentric. When his daughter was acting at the Winter Garden Theatre he was known to accost strangers who chanced to be passing the theatre door, in Broadway, and invite them to enter and witness the performance; and sometimes he would speak to a person who was departing from the theatre before the end of the play, and earnestly inquire, "What's the matter? Don't you like the acting?" Once, when he happened to meet, in the Strand, London, his old acquaintance, John S. Clarke, who disliked Irving and had spoken adversely of his acting, he performed a kind of war-dance, circling round the comedian, and loudly exclaiming, "Let me *see* him! Let me *see* the wonderful man who doesn't admire Henry Irving!" On one occasion he was arraigned before a police magistrate, on complaint of a cab-driver whose attempted extor-

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tion and coincident threatening insolence he had resented. "Did you strike this man?" asked the justice. "*Strike* him?—No, sir," replied Bateman: "I *brushed him aside,* with my hand —thus" (making a sweeping gesture). He had, in fact,—for he was very strong,—knocked the belligerent cab-driver heels over head into the middle of the street. He was an impulsive person. Irving cordially liked him, and often spoke of him with affection. He died, suddenly, in London, March 22, 1875.

THE FIRST GREAT HIT.

Bateman did not, at first, prosper in his management of the Lyceum. Several experiments were tried. George Belmore was starred. Scenes from "Pickwick" were offered, in which Irving acted *Alfred Jingle.* It was not until, yielding to Irving's repeated urgent persuasion, Bateman produced "The Bells,"—an English version by Leopold Lewis, materially altered from the original French drama called "Le Juif Polonais,"—that the tide of fortune turned in his favor. That production was affected on

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November 25, 1871. One of Irving's intimate and trusted friends, George Lowndes, told me that, on the preceding night, at a late hour, he walked to and fro for a long time with the actor in the little street at the rear of the Lyceum Theatre, listening to his earnest talk of the manner in which he purposed to treat the part of *Mathias* in the forthcoming play, and trying to believe that Henry's sanguine expectations would be fulfilled. "I deeply sympathized with him," said that stanch friend, "but I had no faith in the play, and I was grieved for him, and as I parted from him I could only say: 'Well, Irving, I am sorry for you.'" Irving received no encouragement. Bateman, believing that *Mathias,* being "a burgomaster," must, necessarily, be "a fat man," had laughed at the fancied image of the tall, slender, nervous Irving in such a part. A version of the French play, produced at the Alfred Theatre, November 18, under the name of "Paul Zegars," had failed. Nobody except Irving himself believed that success with "The Bells" was possible, but his faith was firm, and

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the manager, playing his company to miserable business, was willing to make the trial. The result was decisive. A prodigious triumph vindicated Irving's judgment. The play was acted 151 consecutive times in the season of 1871-'72, and Irving's wonderful performance of *Mathias*,—commingling character, imagination, intellectual power, passion, pathos, and beautiful art,—materially advanced him toward leadership of the dramatic profession. From that time Bateman believed in Irving with all the flaming intensity of fanatical devotion.

It is amusing to hear,—as often can be heard, at dinner tables and in drawing rooms,—the remarks of persons, many of whom speak through their noses and do not speak English correctly, in censure of the speaking of actors on the stage. The art of speaking blank verse is possessed by only a few public performers, and no doubt the articulation of actors could, in many cases, be improved; but the pretence that enunciation and pronunciation are more correct and finer in society than they are in the theatre is unwarranted and ridiculous. Indeed, the

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shocking, almost deafening din prevalent in great cities is so destructive of that sensibility of the ear on which the quality of the voice largely depends that the general voice is impaired, and clear intonation and melody of speech are seldom heard. Irving, a careful student and scrupulous practitioner of elocution, in his early theatrical days, but, in his maturity, accustomed to subordinate that art to the more essential art of impersonation, had observed the prevalence of defective speaking in society, and he was impatient of the social pretence of superiority in this respect. He once experimented, at a dinner party, in London, where many persons were assembled, and where one of the guests had contemptuously and rudely inveighed against the speaking of actors. He proposed as a test, that each one of the men,—all of whom were educated and all of whom had concurred with the complaint,—should repeat a stanza of poetry, and expressed belief that not one of them could repeat it without an error of elocution. "Come, now," he said: "you're all very sure that the elocution of

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actors is not as good as yours. Let's see. You all know Byron's stanzas about the night before Waterloo. Come now,—I say *not one of you* can speak the first stanza correctly! Try it—and I'll stop you when you go wrong." The first line is "There was a sound of revelry by night." Only one of the company,—the poet Thomas Bailey Aldrich,—reached the sixth line before he blundered. Most of them blundered in the third. The person who had specially censured the actors, proving to be the worst speaker of the group, blundered in the first,—saying "revlery" instead of "revelry." Irving then clinched his contention by reciting the stanza and inviting any person present to stop him at the slightest error in pronunciation or delivery,—which no one was able to do.

The greatest service, because of its beneficent consequences, that Irving rendered to the Theatre was his conscientious, incessant, insistent, effectual assertion of the importance of the actor's art and the dignity of the Stage. In public and in private, everywhere and on all occasions, he maintained that acting is one of

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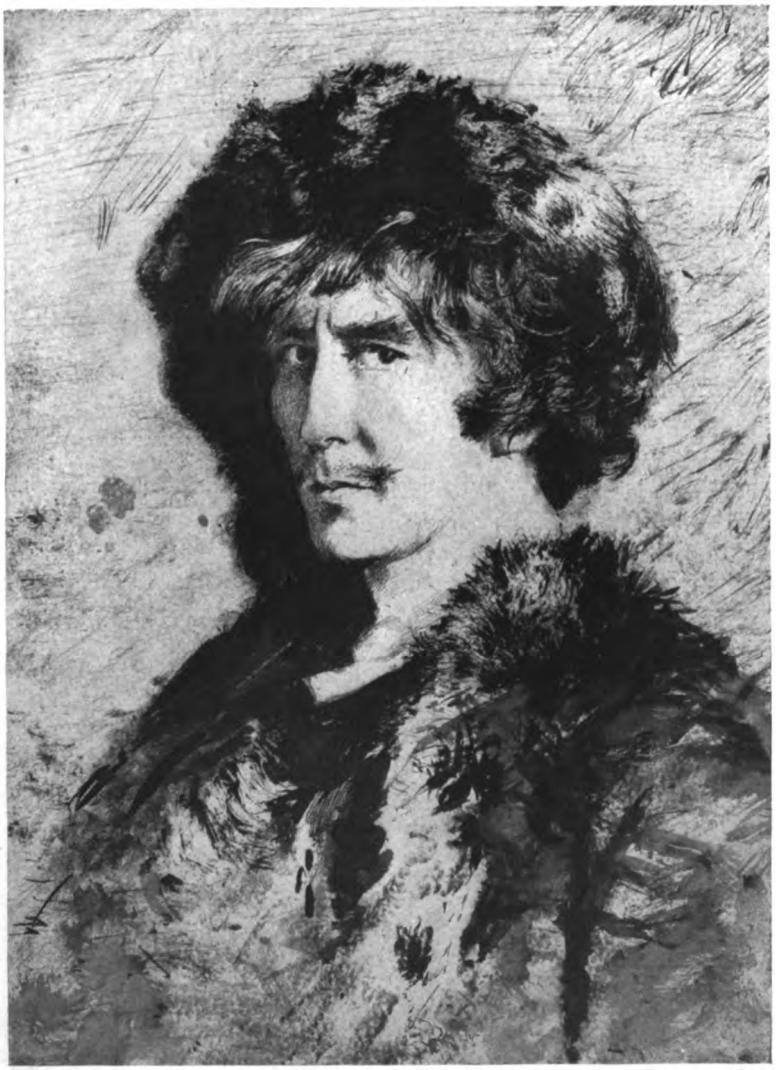

HENRY IRVING AS *VANDERDECKEN*, IN "THE FLYING DUTCHMAN"

FROM THE DRAWING BY ROBERT F. BLUM, IN THE COLLECTION OF ELSIE LESLIE WINTER

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the learned professions, and that the actor is as much entitled to the respect of society as the clergyman, the doctor, the lawyer, the college professor, or any other dignitary whatsoever. Every movement tending to the good of the Theatre he practically helped. Every influence that he deemed injurious to it he sternly opposed. To him the Theatre was a temple and the right administration of it a solemn duty. He resented every attack that was made on his profession. He would not, for even an instant, permit any disparagement of it to pass unrebuked. He opposed all the fads, fripperies, and follies with which speculators in public "amusement" all around him were encumbering the Stage and degrading the vocation of the actor. He contemned the Music Hall. He opposed the Ibsen movement. He detested and despised the "Problem Play" and emphatically expressed his aversion to it. He habitually chose for theatrical illustration great subjects, whether in comedy or tragedy, and in the presentment of them he enlisted the auxiliary aid of the ablest repre-

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sentatives of the various other arts whom his magnetic personality could attract and his profuse liberality reward. In his management of the London Lyceum, which extended over a period of twenty-four years,—from December 30, 1878, to July 19, 1902,—he raised the institution of the Theatre to a social eminence which it had not before occupied, and he erected a standard and provided an example which have ever since been emulated and followed. The members of the dramatic profession, whether in Great Britain or America, are indebted to Henry Irving more than to any other person of their profession for the esteem, whether practical or theoretical, in which their calling is held, because it was Henry Irving who made it understood that the actor is not a mountebank but a gentleman and a scholar, and that the Theatre is one of the most potent agencies of civilization. That is an important fact, and one which should be kept in remembrance. If there were no solid basis for the Theatre, if it possessed no title to public respect, inherent in its essentiality to the public welfare,

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it would at once sink to the level of a mere trade.

PULPIT FULMINATIONS.

Pulpit fulminations against the Theatre are neither so numerous nor so violent as they were in former years, but they continue to be ejaculated, and no doubt they will be audible as long as bigoted clergymen flourish and as long as the Christian Religion,—which ought to make its votaries gentle and just,—makes many of them intolerant and cruel. The Theatre, as is well known, was originally, in Catholic countries of Europe, a sort of auxiliary of the Church,—which sanctioned and used "Miracle Plays,"—but, gradually, it took an independent form and grew into a separate and, finally, a powerful institution; whereupon the Church became savagely antagonistic to its offspring, and practically signified its emnity by persecution. It is an ancient quarrel, and it ought not to endure. The Theatre is essential to the public welfare, and it should not be, and cannot be, suppressed. Selfishness and vanity, however,

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are strong foes to reconciliation. The actual reason, as distinguished from the alleged one, for clerical opposition to the Stage is jealousy on the part of pulpit performers, combined with anxious apprehension lest the influence of the Theatre should exceed that of the Church. The extent of injustice to which intolerance is capable of proceeding was exemplified, not very long after the death of Irving, by the Rev. Dr. Broughton, a clergyman of Atlanta, Georgia, who actually went so far as to represent the great actor and manager *as an opponent of the Stage* and a disparager and assailant of his own vocation! That preacher seems to have been uncommonly acidulous in his remarks, delivering several tremendous, because self-convincing, reasons why the Theatre should be suppressed everywhere as well as in Atlanta, Georgia, and he concluded his philippic by quoting a statement, attributed to Irving, to the effect that "the playhouse is a dangerous place for men and women of weak powers and characters."

Whether Irving actually made that statement, or not, I do not know: but it is a true

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statement—of many places besides the playhouse; for example, it is true of the Church; but any attempt to represent Henry Irving as, in any way, at any time, or on any ground, an enemy of the Theatre or of the Art of Acting, or of their votaries, could come only of ignorance or malicious falsehood. Irving often made opportunities,—and he never lost one,—of defending his profession. His views of the Stage are recorded in his many public addresses, and those addresses are easily accessible; and if the Rev. Dr. Broughton, or any other clergymen, were really desirous of acquainting the religious community with the opinions and convictions of that noble actor and gentleman, who lived and died in the service of the Drama, it would be easy to accomplish that desire by reading those addresses from the pulpit. They are, at least, as good as most sermons, and better than many. They contain much information, and the spirit of them is pure, earnest, thoughtful, liberal, and sweet. In one of them, delivered at Harvard University, in 1885, Irving said:

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"We do not claim to be any better than our fellows in other walks of life. . . . It is impossible to point to any vocation which is not attended by temptations that prove fatal to many. . . . The immortal part of the Stage is its nobler part. . . . I have been an actor for nearly thirty years, and what I have told you is the fruit of my experience, and of an earnest and conscientious belief that the calling to which I am proud to belong is worthy of the sympathy and support of all intelligent people."

THE PRIMATE'S MISTAKE.

He remained an actor twenty years longer. A considerable time subsequent to his Harvard address a significant incident, in which Irving was concerned, occurred at a country mansion in England, an incident which he afterward related to the present writer, who, therefore, can vouch for its truth. It chanced that Irving was dining with a company of distinguished persons, among whom was the Primate of All England,—the late Archbishop of Canterbury. That venerable Prince of the Church spoke, in terms of disapproval, as to the employment of children, by Irving, in the

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London Lyceum Theatre. To those remarks Irving replied:

"Sir, I cannot admit the justice of your opinion, nor can I refrain from assuring you that it is absolutely groundless. The children who are employed in my theatre are carefully guarded, and are as well cared for as they would be in any home; better, in some cases, than they are by their parents. I require that their conduct and manners should be above reproach, and I will add that such is not the case with the choir boys who sing in your lordship's cathedral,—for, within this week, I, personally, was obliged to call to order a number of those choir boys, who were creating a disturbance during divine service, a thing that never could happen during a performance in any first-class theatre."

The Archbishop made no immediate response, but, after the party had retired for the night, he went to Irving's room, sat beside him,—the actor having gone to bed,—and there and then expressed regret for his error and thanks for having been set right.

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It is much to be wished that the Clergy in general would emulate such a good example of liberal feeling and justice. The people of the Stage are like other people,—as a class, neither better nor worse than those among whom they live. The Theatre cannot with reason be held responsible for the immorality of some of its members any more than the Church can be held responsible for the wickedness, not infrequently made known, of some of its votaries,—even of clergymen themselves. If there actually is a difference, in point of morals, between the two institutions (and there does not seem to be any), it, probably, is in favor of the Theatre, —for the Theatre, be it remembered, does not assume, as the Church does, to be the custodian of all the virtues; and, moreover, the Theatre, behind its scenes, and without any of that glamour, altogether fictitious, with which it has been invested by an ignorant public fancy, is as hard, stern, and exacting as a machine shop. For those persons who are in earnest (and there are as many earnest persons on the stage as there are in the pulpit), the continuous, strenu-

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ous toil requisite for the attainment of success in acting leaves but scant time for needful rest. The Stage is an excellent thing, when it is rightly conducted, and that it should be rightfully conducted is the heartfelt desire of every worthy member of it, man or woman. The profession of Acting has done great good to thousands of persons; and if the Clergy must occupy itself with the Theatre it would be well employed, not in condemnation of it as an institution, but in condemnation of a vulgar, "commercial" misuse of it that is made by unworthy persons who, while making loud protestations of racial integrity and religious motive, conduct it as a mere bazaar.

Pulpit denunciation of the actor is powerless to stay the dramatic movement or to affect the trend of educated public opinion. Bigotry, shooting from behind a hedge, causes only contempt and dislike. The Church, like every other institution, must maintain itself, not by denouncing contemporary educational forces, but by making and keeping its own force potent and interesting. When a country clergyman,

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complaining to Henry Ward Beecher that his congregation often went to sleep while he was preaching, asked what he should do "to wake them up," the famous preacher replied: "If *my* hearers should go to sleep, I should ask the deacon to come 'round and 'wake up' *me!*" The acrid ebullition of the Atlanta clergyman, tending to stigmatize Henry Irving, by misapplying words attributed to him so as to make him seem to decry the profession that he loved, honored, and devotedly served all the days of his life, exemplifies an ecclesiastical pose, either ignorant or disingenuous, which is not only unjust to the Theatre but injurious to the Church and detrimental to the welfare of the public. A cynical observer might remark upon the singularity that testimony of actors against the Stage is always quoted either from actors who have turned preachers or from actors who cannot reply, because they happen to be dead. It would be interesting to note the result if some ecclesiastical crank would select, and apply to condemnation of the dramatic calling, remarks by John Hare, or E. S. Willard, or

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Robert Mantell, or Julia Marlowe, or E. H. Sothern, or Tyrone Power. The answer would have no uncertain sound.

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

On a day in the autumn of 1899 it chanced that Irving and I were driving in Central Park, New York, and in the course of that drive he related to me, in detail, certain trials through which he had passed after the accident which disabled him on the occasion of his second revival of "King Richard III.," December 19, 1896, at the Lyceum. The underlying cause of his breakdown at that time was trouble in his private life,—ingratitude and disappointment. The performance on the night of the revival of "King Richard III." had been successful, and after it ended, though wearied almost to death, he had entertained friends at supper,—according to his hospitable custom on nights of signal endeavor. After reaching his lodging in Grafton Street he made a misstep on a crooked stairway, and, falling, he sustained what proved to be a serious hurt. With much difficulty he

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contrived to drag himself to his bedroom, where, in extreme pain, he fell helpless on his bed. No person was near. His reclusive habit in his home had banished the housekeeper and servants to remote quarters in the rear of the building. It was long before he could manage to reach a bell pull and ring for assistance. A doctor was then called, who found that the kneecap in his right leg had been injured. Measures for relief were promptly taken, but more than two months passed before Irving was able to resume acting, and within that time the Lyceum had lost much money. Then came two theatrical productions, "Peter the Great" and "The Medicine Man," which failed, augmenting the loss, and those misfortunes were succeeded by a fire (February 18, 1898,), which consumed the valuable scenery, only partly insured, that he had accumulated for the setting of forty plays. More calamitous than all, in the autumn of 1898 he was taken ill with pneumonia, and from about the middle of October till about the middle of the following April was incapacitated for acting and compelled to stay

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in retirement. The illness came upon him in Glasgow, a city which in rainy weather is exceptionally dreary, and for many weeks of a stormy season he was obliged to remain there. Later he went to the milder clime of Bournemouth and there began preparation for reappearance in the new play of "Robespierre."

Irving, in his narration to me of the ordeal thus indicated, dwelt on many incidents. One of the worst trials came when he believed that his troubles were over. "When at last I had recovered," he said, "I thought I would make a final call on the doctor in London and make sure that all was right. He was a kind, good fellow and a good physician, but he was careless that day. He welcomed me and said he wished to take another look at my throat. He looked, and he remarked that a little spraying would do good. He put the instrument into my mouth and sprayed the throat for a few moments, and then started backward, turning very pale. I asked him what was the matter. 'The tip of the instrument—you have swallowed it!' he exclaimed. 'Well,' I said, 'what shall I do?'

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I had no painful sensation, but by his desire we called in another physician and stated the case. The two doctors retired for a consultation, after which I was informed that no present need existed for doing anything. I then returned to my lodging. The day was dark and wet. I felt that my shoes were damp, and, stooping to take them off, I was instantly aware of a sharp pain in the throat. The pain ceased when I stood up. I went back to the doctor, and found him nervous and frightened. He said he knew another doctor who could make use of the X-ray and proposed that we should visit him. We went. It was about two o'clock and we were told he was absent and would not be home till five. I went back to my room and sat there alone, thinking it over. Rather a dreary time, not knowing but the thing in my throat might shift and choke me to death at any moment. At five o'clock my doctor and I were with the fortunate possessor of the X-ray. He was much interested and asked several questions. While replying, the pain in my throat became severe. I almost

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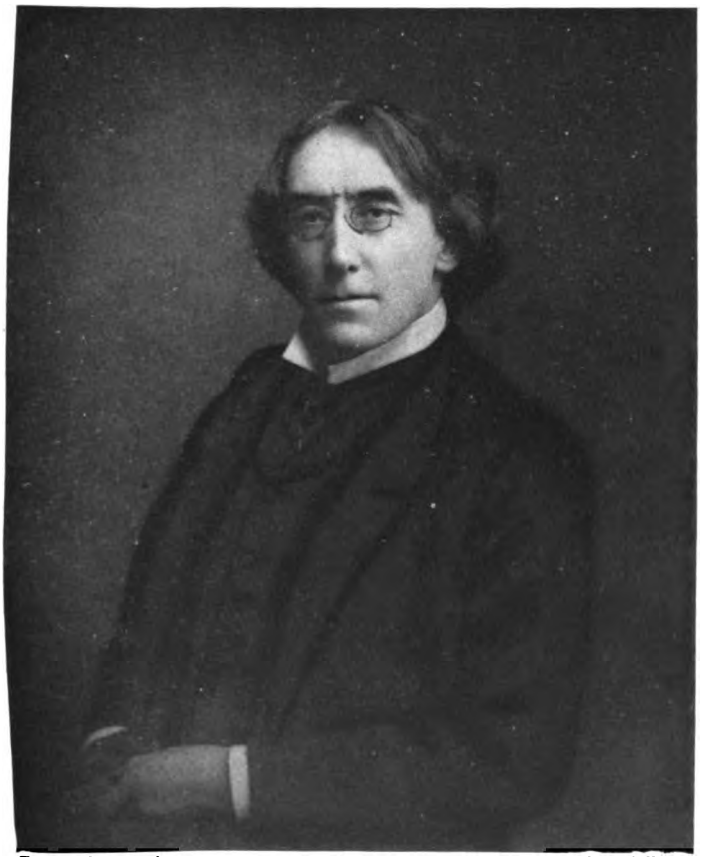

From a Photograph *Author's Collection*

HENRY IRVING, ABOUT 1885

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strangled, a violent cough shook me, and out came the steel tip of the instrument and fell on the floor. It had been lodged in the larynx and had remained there. Both doctors agreed that the muscles had been so strengthened by long use in acting that they were able to hold the piece of steel, which, if it had entered the windpipe, would have caused my death." I asked Irving whether he had felt alarmed during all the time of this perilous experience. "No," he answered, "not in the least; I was merely annoyed."

AMERICAN FESTIVALS.

Many festivals in honor of Irving occurred in American cities, in the course of his several tours of this country. One of the most significant and interesting of them happened, April 6, 1885, at Delmonico's (the Twenty-sixth Street house), on which occasion William Maxwell Evarts presided and the principal speaker was Henry Ward Beecher. Irving was about to sail for England, and it was not then believed that he would revisit America. I had the honor

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of participating in the tribute to him then offered, and I delivered the poem which follows:

Now fades across the glimmering deep, now darkly drifts away,
The royal monarch of our hearts, the glory of our day;
The pale stars shine, the night wind sighs, the sad sea makes its moan,
And we, bereft, are standing here, in silence and alone.

Gone every shape of power and dread his magic touch could paint;
Gone haunted Aram's spectral face, and England's martyred saint;
Gone Mathias, of the frenzied soul, and Louis' sceptred guile,
The gentle head of poor Lesurques, and Hamlet's holy smile.

No more in gray Messina's halls shall love and revel twine;
No more on Portia's midnight bowers the moon of summer shine;
No golden barge on Hampton's stream salute the perfumed shore;
No ghost on Denmark's rampart cliff affright our pulses more!

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The morning star of art, he rose across the eastern sea
To wake the slumbering harp and set the frozen fountain free;
Now, wrapt in glory's mist, he seeks his orient skies again;
And tender thoughts in sorrowing hearts are all that must remain. . . .

Slow fade, across a drearier sea, beneath a darker sky,
The dreams that cheer, the lights that lure, the baffled hopes that die;
Youth's trust, love's bliss, ambition's pride—the white wings all are flown,
And Memory walks the lonely shore, indifferent and alone.

Yet sometimes o'er that shadowy deep, by wandering breezes blown,
Float odors from Hesperian isles, with music's organ tone,
And something stirs within the breast, a secret, nameless thrill,
To say, though worn and sear and sad, our hearts are human still:—

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If not the torrid diamond wave that made young life sublime,
If not the tropic rose that bloomed in every track of time,
If not exultant passion's glow, when all the world was fair,
At least one flash of heaven, one breath of Art's immortal air!

Ah, God, make bright, for many a year, on Beauty's heavenly shrine,
This hallowed fire that Thou hast lit, this sacred soul of Thine!
While love's sweet light and sorrow's tear,—life's sunshine dimmed with showers,—
Shall keep for aye his memory green in these true hearts of ours!

"BEING REMEMBERED."

One morning in the old Plaza Hotel in New York, where Irving several times lodged, we had been talking of the relief of Mafeking, the news of which had just been received, and of the gallant defence of that place by Baden-Powell,—his intrepid spirit and indomitable

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resolution. "He is a great man," said Irving: "he has done a great thing. I should like to send a message to him. I think it would please him; I *know* it would." Then, after a pause, he added: "I'll send a cable." Bram Stoker, Irving's expeditious business manager, while sympathetic with the feeling and the purpose thus signified, expressed doubt whether a despatch could be sent through to Mafeking, and also mentioned the cost. "Never mind," said Irving, "we'll try it. He's a great man. He has done a wonderful thing." Then he dictated this cable: "Well done. Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor!—Henry Irving, New York." Stoker remarked that the words "New York" at the end were not necessary and would increase the charge. Irving, however, insisted that they should be used, saying: "It isn't the words, it's *the being remembered.* A man likes to be *remembered* when he's far away. A despatch from New York will seem more than one from London." And so the message was immediately sent.

He remembered even the most casual remarks

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that were made in his hearing; he never forgot a face or a name, and his faculty of observation was as fine as his faculty of memory. Without seeming to see, he saw everything that was going on around him. Once, when he and I, in earnest conversation, were walking slowly along beside the Thames, not far from Hampton Court, he said: "We have been followed for some time by a man who is trying to overhear us; let us turn back." I had not been aware that anybody was near. Long afterward, in New York, I received a letter from a stranger, stating that he had followed us at that time and place, and had either taken or tried to take a Kodak picture of us. Irving's vigilant eyes had seen the man from the first, and he had taken the fortunate precaution of speaking in a low tone,—fortunate because he had been telling me the sad story of a lovely girl, dear to him in his youth, who had been betrayed by a distinguished comedian, who thus inflicted on Irving, in early life, an injury which he never forgave and a sorrowful loss which he never forgot.

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"DETRACTION WILL NOT SUFFER IT!"

It has been said of Irving that he lacked feeling, that he was all mind and no heart. Speaking to me, Ellen Terry said: "He is *gentle, not tender.*" The late Henry Labouchere wrote of him that "he was *always acting.*" Greater errors could not have been made. Irving knew enough of human nature to know that it is frequently selfish and in many ways infirm, and he realized that "there is no art to find the mind's construction in the face"; but, essentially, he was one of the most loving and lovable of men,—when and where he fully trusted. He was singularly sensitive to kindness, and any little token of remembrance that reached him from a friendly hand,—if it were only a trifle, as inconsiderable as a cravat or a cigar case,—was treasured by him with a gratitude almost pathetic. But he did not "wear his heart upon his sleeve," and he did not trust many persons. He had suffered much, and he was lonely to the last. He was one of the most intellectual persons that ever trod the stage, but

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those who knew him best could testify that his sympathy was as wide as the widest experience of mankind and as deep as the deepest feelings of compassion and tenderness that ever possessed the human heart.

Hamlet remarks that a great man must "build churches," if his memory is to outlive his life half-a-year. Irving did not build churches,—but he is not forgotten yet, though he has been dead ten years, and he never will be forgotten, "while memory holds a seat in this distracted globe." The detraction, however, which could not suffer his honorable preëminence while he was among the living, has been active in seeking to disparage him since his death. A passing reference is here appropriate to certain derogatory remarks about him that, sad to say, have been published, by that wonderful and deservedly eminent actress who, for a quarter of a century, was his honored professional associate. "Henry Irving was an egotist." That statement is made by Ellen Terry, in her Autobiography. "As I think it," she adds, "I may as well say so." There are many of Miss

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Terry's admirers who, reading those words, have felt that, if she is foolish enough to believe them, she might have been sensible enough *not* to "say" them. If it be egotism to feel an interest in all that humanity does and is; to sympathize with every righteous human effort and every affection; to cherish, as a priceless treasure, the slightest gift or token of remembrance from a friend; to labor, unceasingly, in the service of a great art and of every member of a profession too often abused and degraded; to help every human being to whom help could reach; and to do all in his power for the advantage of a loved professional associate,—then Henry Irving *was* an egotist; but not otherwise. Miss Terry has also provided the assurance that Henry Irving did not appreciate the acting of other actors,—an amazing misrepresentation; all the more amazing, because of its source! To me Irving declared that Ellen Terry's performance of *Nance Oldfield* was the absolute perfection of comedy acting,—which, in its branch of that form of art, it certainly was; and also, while somewhat depreciating his

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own marvellous personation of *Mephistopheles,* he said that her associate performance of *Margaret,* in "Faust," could not be equalled. In allusion to Ada Rehan he said to me: "She is a *great* actress; one of the dignities of the Stage, and with whom it is an honor to appear." The fine comedian John Hare, in a magazine article, referring to Ellen Terry's singular statements, mentions Irving's declaration to him, that Jefferson's *Acres* was a "perfect piece of comedy acting and the finest realization of the character he had ever seen." It is true that Irving did not always hold that view: when he first saw Jefferson act *Acres,* having the old, traditional, low-comedy ideal of the part in mind, he did not like it; but later, when he had reflected on Jefferson's design, on his refinement and elevation of the character, his vivifying treatment of the whole of "The Rivals," and on the superb precision of his execution and the irresistible effect of hearty, kindly, sympathetic mirth created by it, he revised his judgment. His favorable opinion was expressed to other persons besides Sir

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John; among them, in my presence, he expressed it to Jefferson himself, and he invited that comedian to come to England and produce "The Rivals" at the London Lyceum Theatre, offering, if he would do so, himself to act *Sir Anthony Absolute*. When Hare was about to act for the first time in this country Irving wrote to me a most earnest, kind, commendatory letter about him; and once, in my presence, addressing Miss Terry, he expressed himself as a cordial, almost a wondering, admirer of the histrionic ability of Sarah Bernhardt. In fact, Irving admired,—and warmly expressed his admiration for,—all achievements of other actors (and they were many) that he thought admirable.

The Stage is said to be now at its meridian. Never has the Theatre been so well managed, artistically or materially: those who manage it say so, and so, accordingly, it must be. The positive voice of energetic Youth, sure of everything and clearly remembering the occurrences of at least ten, or even of fifteen, years, indorses the assurance. All geese are swans. All con-

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temporary actors are superb. "Old men must die, or the world would grow musty!" And, being dead, their old associates must disparage them. Thus "justice" is done: that which we "think" we "say," and thus does independent judgment triumph. Yet a few old friends are left who, thinking of a little square of stone in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, near to the graves of Garrick and Henderson, share, as I do, the feeling expressed in gallant old Sir Walter's lines:

> "I'd give the lands of Deloraine
> Dark Musgrave were alive again!"

On the morning when Irving sailed on his final homeward voyage, and before the steamship had passed the Narrows, a New York daily newspaper, just published, was placed in his hands, containing an article relative to his farewell appearance at the Harlem Opera House and quotations from a speech which it was alleged he had delivered there, on the previous evening, abusive of the American people and expressive of his contempt for them and of

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the pleasure that he felt in leaving America! Not one word of the article was true. The statement thus made was made with deliberate malice, and it was false and libellous. Irving, as it happened, had invited my son, Mr. Jefferson Winter, and me, to take luncheon with him, on his last day in America, March 25, 1904, and we were with him during several hours, on that day, at the old Plaza Hotel. I well remember the incidents of that occasion and the manner in which Irving's farewell speech was prepared, in room 288. Richard Mansfield had unexpectedly called, and Irving asked him to join us, at luncheon. Each of those actors, as it chanced, was particularly desirous, at that time, to strengthen his theatrical company, and an animated conversation occurred between them, relative to various performers then more or less prominent. Mansfield said that he had seen and talked with Miss Edith Wynne Matthison, and,—though he expressed himself as, personally, repelled by her,—he strongly recommended that actress to Irving's attention, and, eventually, on Mansfield's

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recommendation, Miss Matthison was engaged by Irving, and she acted with him, for a few weeks, in England. After Mansfield had left us Irving produced a draft of a speech, saying he expected it would be necessary for him to speak to the audience after his final appearance, and asked me to read and revise it: that I did, then and there, retaining, however, the spirit and purport of the original, and the closing words precisely as he had written them. That speech was duly delivered by Irving, and it disposes of the aspersion that was cast on him by the malignant and cowardly traducer who resorted to forgery in the propagation of slander. He said:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: It has been a privilege to act before the American audience, and it is a privilege to thank you,—and, through you, to thank the great public of America,—for the gracious and inspiring welcome that we have received. All good things come to an end, and we particularly feel this, knowing that our American season ends to-night. It is, for us, the close of a pleasant experience that we shall always remember.

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"On a memorable occasion, more than twenty years ago, we were first welcomed to America,—here, in your hospitable city. Other visits have succeeded the first, and not a jarring note nor an unkind word has ever chanced to mar the happiness of our intercourse with the great public of America. This is a memory that I shall always cherish. As said by Shakespeare:

> 'I count myself in nothing else so happy
> As in a soul rememb'ring my good friends.'

"You will not long remember me. The actor is soon forgotten. But I shall long remember you, and often recall your cheering plaudits and your constant kindness. For my company and for myself, I thank you, and would ask you to think of us as ever your grateful, loyal, and very loving servants.

"We are to sail away to-morrow, and, in bidding you Farewell, I can only tell you that our hearts are full of gratitude and affection. The wish is in my heart and on my lips—God bless America!"

"GOD BLESS AMERICA."

Henry Irving's feeling toward the American people was that of respect and gratitude, as it had much reason to be. He made eight pro-

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fessional tours of America,—1883, 1884, 1887, 1893, 1895, 1899, 1901, and 1903,—passing most of the time within the United States, and his gross receipts, in the course of those eight tours, amounted to $3,500,000. On the occasion of one of his latest appearances on the American stage he delivered a speech before the curtain in which he earnestly declared that but for the bounteous, practical support he had continuously received from the American people he could not have maintained his enterprises, retrieved his losses, incident to illness and fire, and gone successfully on with the professional work that he had planned to accomplish. The last words ever publicly uttered by him in America were those uttered on the stage of the Harlem Opera House, March 25, 1904, in the speech which I have quoted above: "God bless America!"

Irving's views relative to religion were, like those of many other intellectual persons, variable. In talking with me he spoke freely on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes he spoke of religious beliefs and of death. He kept a

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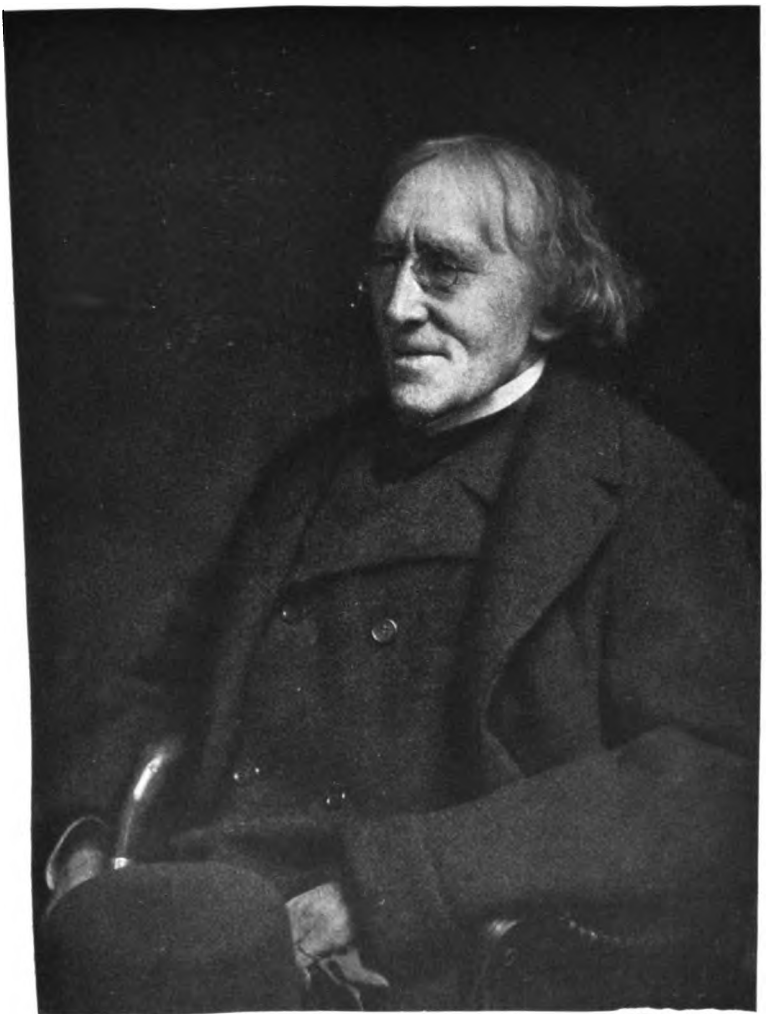

From a Photograph by William Crooke *Author's Collection*

HENRY IRVING

In the Last Year of His Life

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picture of the Christ in his bedroom, where he could see it the moment he awoke, and of *the spirit* of the Christ he spoke to me with profound reverence. I remember having heard him say, when addressing a young man and discriminating between the moral responsibility of youth and manhood, as to sin: "God would forgive *you,* but he would not forgive *me.*" I chanced to be with him in his Grafton Street lodging, London, on a Sunday morning when a note from Bancroft was brought to him, telling him of the death of Edmund Yates, who had fallen in an aisle of one of the theatres, on the previous evening, immediately after the close of the performance, and expired of apoplexy. He handed the note to me, and after a moment, looking out of the window, he said: "Poor Edmund! I suppose that is the *end of everything* for him." Once, in company at a dinner, a lady, sitting next to Irving, seemed desirous of eliciting from him an expression of positive belief in a future life. "Do you not think," she asked, "that we should say of the departed that they have 'gone before'?" "No,

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madam," he answered, "I do not. I think we should say they are *dead:* it is much finer—much grander."

Irving was greater than anything he ever did. Even to think of him, for those who really knew and understood the man, is to think of a vibrant, unconquerable spirit and a ceaseless exemplar of beneficent purpose and noble endurance. He had great pride of intellect and at times a certain intellectual scorn of everything, including himself; yet that was only a vagary of feeling, for he believed in his time and passionately he believed in the good of humanity and in a triumphant destiny for the people. He knew the value of social favor and support, and, like a wise manager, he never neglected any worthy means of enlisting them; but his main dependence was on the multitude of his public, and his greatest pride was in the people's love and esteem. "We must not expect too much of our *friends,*" he said—"our friends, who do not always pay for admission to the theatre. But the *people* will understand and approve when we do worthy things, and

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they will stand by us!" The world seems very lonely without him, and now, looking back over the years of our happy comradeship, remembering his dauntless spirit, his inspiring courage, his steadfast endurance, his magnificent achievement, the example that he set of fidelity to duty, and the goodness and grace with which he blessed and beautified life, some words that I wrote long ago recur to my thought, and I repeat them in loving memory of one of the noblest men that I have ever known:

While summer days are long and lonely,
  While autumn sunshine seems to weep,
While midnight hours are bleak, and only
  The stars and clouds their vigils keep,
All gentle things that live will moan thee,
  All fond regrets forever wake;
For earth is happier having known thee,
  And heaven is sweeter for thy sake!

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VIII.

JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON.

1853—19—.

SCOTLAND, prolific of poets, has not produced many distinctive actors: the national character is reticent; but the actors whom she has produced, such as Murray, Fennell, Compton, Howard, Robert Bruce Mantell, and Frank Worthing, have been of fine quality. Johnston Forbes-Robertson, although born in England (London, January 16, 1853), is a Scot, and his mind,—individual, resolute, tenacious of purpose, prudent, and of inflexible integrity,—is essentially Scotch. His parents were natives of Scotland and, until their removal to London, residents of Aberdeen. His father, John Forbes-Robertson, was a journalist, an exceptionally able critic of the fine arts, a devoted lover of poetry, an excellent reader,

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and possessed of talents which, in the judgment of his friends, would have made him a capital actor if he had chosen the profession of the Stage. Johnston was educated at the Charterhouse, that interesting institution memorably associated with Coleridge, Lamb, Thackeray, and other famous persons, and at a school in the old French city of Rouen. He early evinced signal talent for the art of painting, and to that art his endeavor, in youth, was assiduously devoted. In 1870, having returned to England, he was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy, where he made notable progress. One of his friends was the fine dramatist and poet William Gorman Wills (1828-1891), and it was in Wills's play of "Mary, Queen o' Scots," produced February 23, 1874, at the Princess' Theatre, London, with the beautiful Mrs. Wybert Rousby as the *Queen,* that, on the following March 5, he made his first appearance on the stage. His part was *Chastelard.* His performance was deemed auspicious, and his success on that occasion determined the direction of his career. He

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had intended to be a painter; he became an actor.

From Mrs. Rousby's company he went to one which, some time earlier, had been organized by Charles Reade, and appeared as *James Annesley,* in Reade's play of "The Wandering Heir." Ellen Terry, who had recently returned to the stage (February 28, 1874), after an absence of six years, was the representative of the heroine, *Philippa Chester,* and it was with her that Forbes-Robertson then performed,—at first in London, at Astley's Theatre; subsequently, when the play had ended its metropolitan "run," in the provinces,—making acquaintance with a fine dramatic genius, and indubitably profiting by her influence and cogent example. A mention of him by Miss Terry, in her book called "The Story of My Life" (1907), suggests his aspect and character at that time: "As a boy he was wonderful: a dreamy, poetic-looking creature, in a blue smock, far more an artist than an actor, and full of aspirations and ideals." That he should not have been distinctively an actor is not sur-

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prising: actors are not made in a day: it was only after a studious and laborious novitiate in Charles Calvert's company, at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, which he joined in September, 1874, that his excellent histrionic powers were developed and the opulent maturity of them assured.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF SAMUEL PHELPS.

Every young actor begins by imitating a model; later, if he possesses distinctive character, his experience makes him independent, and he suggests nature directly, in a way of his own. At Calvert's theatre Forbes-Robertson's artistic sense was strongly influenced by the profoundly sincere and scrupulously correct method of the acting of Samuel Phelps. That actor, although then seventy years old, was still vigorous, still able to touch the heart and enthrall the mind. Phelps, in his latter years (his supremely able management of Sadler's Wells Theatre, for which specially he was distinguished and is commemorated, began in 1844 and ended in 1862), went to Calvert's

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theatre for several successive engagements as a star, and Forbes-Robertson was cast to act with him in various plays, one of them being "King Henry IV." At the first rehearsal of that noble play Phelps, who "doubled" *King Henry* and *Justice Shallow,* addressing Forbes-Robertson, who had come on as *Prince Henry,* bluntly said: "Young man, I see you know nothing about this; come to my room to-night." The subsequent interview proved agreeable and fortunate. The veteran was considerate and kind in his instructive advice, and the acquaintance thus begun (1874) soon ripened into a cordial friendship. The feeling of Forbes-Robertson toward his preceptor was that of veneration, and Phelps, in turn, became so much attached to his pupil that as long as he continued on the stage (his death befell in 1878, at Coopersale, near Epping) he caused him to be engaged, whenever possible, to act *Cromwell, Joseph Surface, Prince Henry,* and other parts, and he sat to him for his portrait as *Cardinal Wolsey,* a bold and truthful painting, which now adorns the Garrick Club, London.

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The teaching of Phelps, an actor of great ability and experience, who had played all sorts of parts, knew all the stage traditions "with a learnèd spirit," and was "rich in saving common sense," materially aided Forbes-Robertson, helping him to form his style and promoting his advancement. Distinctiveness of character, consistency and continuity of impersonation, thoroughness of elaboration, clarity of articulation, simplicity in everything,—those were some of the essential attributes of art upon which Phelps, a purist and a martinet, insisted, and they all appeared in Forbes-Robertson's acting. Happily, he did not conform to a custom which seems to have been characteristic of Phelps and of several prominent actors of Phelps's time, that of strenuous insistency of enforcement in speech. His elocution was deliciously melodious, his style gracefully pliant, and in this respect he bettered the instruction he received in youth.

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LABORS AND VICISSITUDES.

The progress of Forbes-Robertson from the period of his novitiate to the time when he assumed authoritative direction of his professional career was made in the customary manner. He acted in various stock companies in London, and as an auxiliary to various stars there and elsewhere. At one time he was a member of Squire Bancroft's company at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, where he performed in many plays, including the charming comedies of "Caste," "School," and "Ours." At another time he was associated,—playing *Sir Horace Welby,* of which part he was the original representative,—with Genevieve Ward, when (August 21, 1879) that exceptionally able actress laid the foundation of her memorable success as *Stéphanie de Mohrivart* in the ingenious, but sophistical, drama of "Forget Me Not," by Herman Merrivale and J. C. Groves. It was in compliance with Forbes-Robertson's earnest counsel that the play was produced. Later (1880-1881) he coöperated

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with the lovely and accomplished Helena Modjeska when she acted in London, under the management of Wilson Barrett, as *Adrienne Lecouvreur* and as Shakespeare's *Juliet*. His first part with her, December 11, 1880, was *Maurice de Saxe;* subsequently he played *Romeo,* of which character, because of his true ideal, winning personality, natural ardor, and exquisite refinement, he was a peculiarly fit representative.

On October 11, 1882, he appeared at the London Lyceum, giving a specially felicitous performance, suitably martial in spirit, yet fraught with tremulous emotion, of the irksome, ungrateful part of *Claudio* in the brilliant revival that Irving then made of "Much Ado About Nothing." During the run of "Much Ado" Irving gave Forbes-Robertson (of whom he was always fond) an order for a painting of the superb Church Scene in his production of that play, which he gladly accepted: "It was my first *real* commission," he told me, "and the price Irving named was a handsome one." After several trials the artist discarded his

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original plan for the execution of the picture and employed a larger, freer, more appropriate one, requiring vastly more work. When the picture had been finished and accepted a check was received by Forbes-Robertson for double the amount agreed on as its price. The check was returned to Irving with a note calling the manager's attention to the fact that it named twice the sum promised. Irving, however, again sent it to Forbes-Robertson, with the characteristic message that as the labor expended on the picture had been twice what had been originally planned it was only right that the payment should also be twice as large.

"Much Ado" had 212 representations at the Lyceum, after which Forbes-Robertson again joined the Bancroft management. Bancroft and his wife, the piquant, charming Marie Wilton, had removed in 1880 from the Prince of Wales's and established themselves at the Haymarket, which then became, for the London public, the home of light comedy. Up to this time (1883) Forbes-Robertson had often been constrained, against his will but much to his

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advantage, to act the parts which are miscalled "character" parts,—all parts being *character* parts, if anything: Bancroft, however, being a performer of eccentric characters, Forbes-Robertson fell more into the line he desired to fill, acting, with distinction, many parts, including *Sir George Ormond,* in "Peril"; *Captain Absolute,* in "The Rivals," and *Julian Beauclerc,* in "Diplomacy." He remained with Bancroft until that actor retired from management, July 20, 1885.

WITH MARY ANDERSON.

In the season of 1885-'86 Forbes-Robertson filled the leading position in Mary Anderson's dramatic company and made his first visit to America. The first part that he acted with Miss Anderson was *Orlando.* I remember piquing his youthful, eager spirit as, walking with him after a rehearsal which I had attended, I playfully chaffed him about the *"Hamlety"* quality of his personation, asking him to remember that *"Orlando* is a *comedy* part." The performance occurred on the memorable

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evening, August 29, 1885, when, in the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, at Stratford-upon-Avon, before one of the most distinguished audiences ever assembled, Miss Anderson first played *Rosalind.* The dominant characteristics of *Orlando* are affluent, calm vitality of youthful manliness and an invariable, galliard grace; a quiet, gentle drollery plays over his habitual mood of pensive preoccupation. Forbes-Robertson's embodiment of that character, a little grave and severe and somewhat too intellectual, was, nevertheless, instinct with the right feeling, formed, finished, and shown with incessant, graceful fluency and admirable skill. His manly tenderness in the scene with the tremulous old *Adam;* his impetuosity in the first encounter with the exiles; his nonchalant humor in the colloquy with *Jaques;* his good-natured, kindly, half-amused, half-perplexed toleration of the mysterious, winsome "boy" who would be taken for *Rosalind,* and, throughout the impersonation, his air of high breeding and his perfect taste commended him to cordial sympathy. The performance, notable for many

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merits, was, in particular, notable for certain rare qualities in which this actor's best embodiments were specially rich,—the qualities, namely, of purity and delicacy in denotement of love for woman. There was no lack of ardor, but the ardor was colored and controlled by manifestation of that hallowing adoration with which true love sublimates passion and consecrates the object it adores.

The other parts acted by Forbes-Robertson during his first American tour with Miss Anderson were *Pygmalion, D'Aulnay,* in "Comedy and Tragedy"; *Claude Melnotte, Romeo,* and *Ingomar.* His personation of *Pygmalion* was original and striking. He made the sculptor horror-stricken and remorseful over his cruel extinction of *Galatea's* beautiful life. His appearance was classic, his bearing noble, his delivery of the text flexible, graceful, and finely intelligent: his touches of playful humor were made with winning sweetness, and his whole performance was instinct with refinement. He embodied *D'Aulnay* with manly grace, making him both gentle and impetuous.

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He was not physically adequate to the requirements of *Ingomar,* but his impersonation was faithful to nature, and it was a touching manifestation of the struggle between barbaric pride and tender, passionate human love suddenly awakened in a savage but noble man. His *Claude Melnotte* was natural, spirited, and effective.

Subsequent to his American tour with Miss Anderson he was seen for a short time on the London stage in performances of Old English Comedy. In the season of 1886-'87 he made a tour of the kingdom with Mary Anderson, and when (April 23, 1887, at Nottingham) that distinguished actress effected her splendid revival of "The Winter's Tale," for which Forbes-Robertson designed the costumes and appointments, he personated *Leontes,* giving a performance which was highly commended for its dignity, authority, deep feeling, and discriminative portrayal of the passion of jealousy. In the following autumn (September 10) that production of "The Winter's Tale" was successfully shown in London at the Lyceum.

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In 1888 Forbes-Robertson was associated for a while with Ellen Wallis at the Shaftesbury Theatre, where he played *Orlando,* and in that year he also gained distinction by a pathetic embodiment of *Arthur Dimmesdale* in a drama, by Stephen Coleridge and Norman Forbes (-Robertson), based on Hawthorne's gloomy romance of "The Scarlet Letter." In 1889, at a new theatre, the Garrick, then first opened under the direction of the superb comedian John Hare, he embodied with singular force and exquisite finish the characters of *Dunstan Renshaw,* in "The Profligate," and *Baron Scarpia,* in an English version of Sardou's disgusting French play of "La Tosca." In 1891 he again came to America, and in company with Miss Elsie De Wolfe acted, at Proctor's Twenty-third Street Theater, New York, October 15, the part of *Martial Hugon,* in "Thermidor."

"Thermidor" was played for six weeks, after which Forbes-Robertson returned to London and rejoined Hare's company at the Garrick. On January 5, 1892, by permission of Hare, he

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participated in Henry Irving's sumptuous revival of "King Henry VIII." at the Lyceum, and by his intrinsic dignity, melting pathos, and exquisite elocution, in the finely drawn character of the *Duke of Buckingham,* gained one of the most impressive and valuable successes of his professional career. Later he once more, and for the last time, acted under Irving's management, appearing (January 12, 1895) at the Lyceum as *Lancelot,* in "King Arthur." His last performance at the Garrick was that of *Lucas Cleeve,* in "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith."

MANAGEMENT—OR MONTE CARLO?

The student of theatrical history who carefully observes the course of parallel careers on the stage is necessarily impressed by the singular spectacle presented of the caprices of fortune; the good luck that befalls one, the bad luck that befalls another, the happy accident that suddenly converts failure into success, the compulsory circumstance that forces a certain line of conduct, the blindness or the vacillation

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that permits opportunity to slip by unimproved, and the desperate courage, or recklessness, that hazards everything on a single chance, and unexpectedly wins. Forbes-Robertson, when a little past the age of forty, found himself in a position in which it was essential for him to decide whether to devote the remainder of his life to the business of "supporting" other actors or to venture for himself. Viewing the condition of the English Stage, he saw the prosperity of actors who, with less of professional experience and actual accomplishment to their credit than his own, were prominent and influential in the theatrical world, and he became convinced that if he was ever to occupy the position to which he was rightfully entitled and to act the great parts he wished to act he must produce plays for himself, as most of the managers were also actors and could not be expected to bring out the plays for him. "God knows," he said to me, "I had no wish to undertake the responsibility of management. I spoke to Irving about it, and he said: 'My boy, why don't you go to Monte Carlo and risk your money

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there? It's no more of a gamble, and at Monte Carlo at least you have the fresh air. But I suppose there's no other way for you.' And there wasn't!"

His first step was to organize a syndicate, to the capital of which he made a liberal contribution. His professional associates in the venture were Mrs. Patrick Campbell and, as business manager, Mr. Frederick Harrison. The Lyceum Theatre was leased from Henry Irving, and on September 21, 1895, the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet" was presented, Forbes-Robertson playing *Romeo,* Charles Coghlan *Mercutio,* and Mrs. Campbell *Juliet,* a production which I had the good fortune to see. The tragedy held its place till January 15, 1896, when it was succeeded by Henry Arthur Jones's drama of "Michael and His Lost Angel," which deservedly failed. "For the Crown," Captain Marshall's delightfully whimsical play "Shades of Night," Louis N. Parker's "Magda," "faithfully translated" from the German of Hermann Sudermann's crotchety and mischievous "Heimat," and a revival of "The

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School for Scandal" occupied the remainder of the season.

PLAYS *HAMLET*.

In 1897 Forbes-Robertson made a still more ambitious venture—a venture which, in the sequel, brought to him the crowning success of his life. He had wisely consulted one of his best friends, one who had been interested in him from the beginning, the leader of the English-speaking Stage, the sagacious, far-sighted, indomitable Henry Irving.

"What shall I do?" he asked.

"Do?" answered Irving. "Do! Why, do 'Hamlet.' "

"Do you mean it?" asked Robertson.

"Of course I mean it," replied Irving. Six weeks afterward, having again leased the Lyceum, "Hamlet" was presented (September 11, 1897), and Forbes-Robertson, acting the *Prince* for the first time, gained the popular and critical favor which ever after followed his performance of that part, and which assured him authentic recognition among the few justly

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renowned leaders of the Stage in his time. Earlier in the same year, while performing at an English provincial theatre, he had added *Othello* to his repertory, and subsequently he acted *Shylock* and *Macbeth*.

NEW FORTUNES AND NEW PLAYS.

The immediate and emphatic success of Forbes-Robertson as *Hamlet* marked the artistic climax of his career. From the time of that achievement till his retirement, 1915, he was in continual practice of his art, sometimes in England, sometimes abroad, occasionally producing new plays, and, whether in old characters or new ones, maintaining his prestige and steadily winning increase of public admiration. In 1898 he made a prosperous tour of Germany and Holland, acting *Hamlet, Macbeth,* and other parts. In 1901 he leased and managed the Comedy Theatre, London, and there produced "Tezma" and a three-act version of "The Sacrament of Judas," both of which ventures failed. In 1902 he controlled the Lyric Theatre, London, and there produced (January 27) Mrs.

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JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON

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Ryley's play of "Mice and Men," in which he acted in association with Miss Gertrude Elliott, and which had a prosperous career of nearly eleven months. On December 15 of that year he made an "all-star" revival of "Othello," in which Miss Elliott, Miss Lina Ashwell, Mr. Ben Webster, Mr. Herbert Waring, Mr. Grahame Browne, and Mr. Sidney Valentine acted in his support. In 1903 he gained another laurel (February 27) by his manly, tender, affecting embodiment of *Dick Heldar* in a play based on Kipling's story of "The Light That Failed."

In 1903-'04 he again professionally visited America, acting *Heldar, Hamlet,* and *Jacques Bernez.* In 1904-'05 he directed first the Duke of York's Theatre, London (under an arrangement with the late Charles Frohman), then the Scala Theatre, of which he was the lessee, producing at those houses, respectively, "The Edge of the Storm" and "For the Crown" (a revival), and "Mrs. Grundy." In 1904-'05 (in New York, at the Knickerbocker Theatre, February 20, 1905) he also acted as *Gerald Wag-*

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oneur, in Mr. H. V. Esmond's play of "Love and the Man," and in a revival of "Hamlet." In 1906, at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York, October 30, he for the first time produced G. B. Shaw's eccentric, half-serious, half-comic, nondescript, but clever, satirical, amusing play of "Cæsar and Cleopatra," which he subsequently made well known throughout America.

On September 1, 1908, at the St. James's Theatre, London, he brought out Jerome K. Jerome's morality play, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," virtually a sermon in colloquial form, designated "An Idle Fancy," which, by reason of Forbes-Robertson's delicate artistic treatment, profound sincerity, spiritual elevation, and personal charm, was made, and long continued to be, prodigiously successful and richly remunerative. It was acted at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, in 1909-'10, for seven months, and in other cities throughout America, in 1910-'11 and 1911-'12. In the Fall of 1912, at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, he began a farewell tour of the British provinces. On March 22, 1913, acting *Hamlet,*

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he began his last engagement in London, at Drury Lane, during which, it is significant to note, his receipts were the largest ever taken in London by any star at any time. On June 6, in that character, he said farewell. On October 2, 1918, at the Shubert Theatre, New York (then first opened), as *Hamlet* he began his farewell tour of America, acting at that theatre until January 3, 1914, going to the Manhattan Opera House on January 5, and saying good-by to the public of the American metropolis on the night of January 24.

His happy marriage with Miss Gertrude Elliott occurred in 1900. On June 3, 1913, the honor of knighthood was fittingly accorded to him by King George the Fifth. His career, socially and professionally, was rounded and complete. He has retired from the stage with a name "great in mouths of wisest censure" and with prospect of passing the latter years of an honorable, useful, beneficent, and brilliantly successful life in the tranquillity of home.

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PERSONALITY.

The personality that Forbes-Robertson revealed through the medium of the many and widely diversified embodiments of dramatic character indicated in this summary of his professional career,—a personality which deeply interested all sorts of people,—was that of an artist, a scholar, an altruist, and an energetic man of action. This much could readily be gathered from his acting. His love of beauty was passionate, his sense of form acute, his temperament gentle, his knowledge extensive. He had observed closely and thought deeply; he possessed strong imagination and great sensibility; he had, through long experience, acquired breadth and clarity, if not invariable accuracy, of judgment, a wide acquaintance with human nature, a tolerant, genial view of life, exact perception of the scope of his faculties, and serene self-poise. He was prone to the acceptance of things that are proclaimed as "new" merely because they are so labelled, which, in whomsoever apparent, is an infirmity. His rosy views

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of the condition of the contemporary Theatre are unsound, which is much to be regretted, because many charlatans can quote his high authority in support of their incompetent and injurious mismanagement of a great institution. His art, repudiative of obscurity, was clear, direct, and cogent, and it was luminous with enthusiasm and authoritative with the profound sincerity, the rigorous self-command, and the innate moral dignity of a lovely nature. This personality, pervading his performances, shaped, animated, and colored his ideals and prescribed the scope of his interpretative faculty, and also it explained the high esteem and the sincere affection which he enlisted as one of the most gracious, sympathetic, and winning actors that have ever graced our Stage.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

In physique and aspect Forbes-Robertson was exceptionally fitted for the dramatic profession. His figure, slender and well proportioned, was about five feet nine inches in height. His person, though lean and seemingly rather

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frail, was sinewy and capable of much exertion and endurance. His arms were long, his hands long, thin, and nervous. His head was symmetrical and well poised, the forehead being indicative of intellectual force, authority, and benignity. His eyes, gray-blue in color, were clear, frank, friendly, and had in them an attentive, eager, inquiring expression, denoting an alert, active, vital, vigorous mind. He had the well-marked eyebrows so essential to an actor, and the long upper lip which has been noted as a characteristic of many members of the histrionic profession. His mouth, thin-lipped and well-shaped, was unusually large, with strong, white, even teeth ("the implements," as the elder Booth called them, urgently commending the use of them in speech), so that he was equipped with all essential means of distinct articulation and effective use of his voice, which was copious, melodious, and sympathetic. His nose was aquiline, long, and delicately modelled; his chin strong, yet sensitive. His complexion was light, the skin being slightly veined over the high cheek-bones. His hair, fine and slightly

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wavy, was light-brown, a little touched with gray. His appearance denoted innate refinement, and his demeanor combined unconscious dignity with unaffected elegance, the repose of mature experience, and the gentleness of natural courtesy.

QUALITIES OF HIS ACTING.

In Forbes-Robertson's acting the dominance of a clearly defined intellectual purpose was continuously visible; it was obvious that nothing had been left to chance. The observer might not always concur with the ideal that was manifested, but judgment, however exigent, would almost always admire the method of execution. That method lacked the reinforcement and overwhelming weight which appertain to a stalwart, massive personality, and it was at times somewhat marred by excessive elaboration of non-essential detail, as when, for instance, during the "Mouse-Trap" play, in "Hamlet," the actor caused the *Prince* to murmur to himself not audibly, but visibly, the lines spoken by the *Players,* excepting only those which he has

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"set down and inserted" for them to speak. The style of his art, nevertheless, in action and speech, was original, easy, gracious, and distinguished. In those characters with which his temperament permitted him completely to sympathize and of which he had obtained a complete mastery, he created a perfect illusion, making his audience forget that he was acting. He was thus thoroughly a dramatic artist, causing the effects of nature by means which had been exhaustively premeditated and privately tested. His "real feeling" had been indulged in the seclusion of his study, and the *effect* of it had been recorded in his memory. He never marred a performance by yielding to the sudden caprice of innovation. He *seemed* to feel, but, exercising self-control and concealing his art, he made the spectator actually feel, and that is the triumph of the true actor. He was not distinctively a *tragedian,* as, for example, the elder Kean was, or the elder Booth, or Edwin Forrest, or Edwin Booth, because he was not endowed with capability of tremendous power of emotional expression, the resistless

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ground-swell and compulsive sweep of sustained tragic passion; yet he was keenly sensitive to tragic influence and situation and to the calamities and woes incidental to mortality. Though his faculty of tragic depiction and utterance was not commensurate with his capacity of apprehension and design, he nevertheless at times manifested great intensity of feeling and nervous force, and by those means he caused moments of surprising tragic effect.

A complete list of the parts that Forbes-Robertson acted in the course of his professional life would be long. Most of his Shakespearean characters have already been mentioned. In the repertory chosen for his farewell tour in America he included only *Hamlet, Shylock,* and *Othello,* and with these he associated *Julius Cæsar,* in "Cæsar and Cleopatra"; *Dick Heldar, The Passer-by,* in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back"; *Mark Embury,* in "Mice and Men," and *Jacques Bernez,* in "The Sacrament of Judas." It is to be regretted that he did not act *Macbeth* here,—that part being the great and final test of an actor's power in the realm

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of imagination. Consideration of these plays, in the order in which they were presented by him in his last engagement in New York, is appropriate.

"HAMLET."

It was my privilege to see Forbes-Robertson's performance of *Hamlet* in London, when, in 1897, he was making his first venture in that character, and I have many times seen it since. The actor's ideal was more nearly harmonious with Shakespeare's conception during his final presentations than it was at first, because more deeply and darkly interfused with sadness; but in one respect, and that a fundamental one, it always remained substantially unchanged,—manifesting the proficient executive faculty of a practical man, which *Hamlet* is not. The soul of an actor shines through his acting. He can by the deft use of art sufficiently identify himself with characters foreign to himself to create illusion, yet his essential quality will remain discernible. Forbes-Robertson was intrinsically an optimist, and even of *Hamlet* he took an

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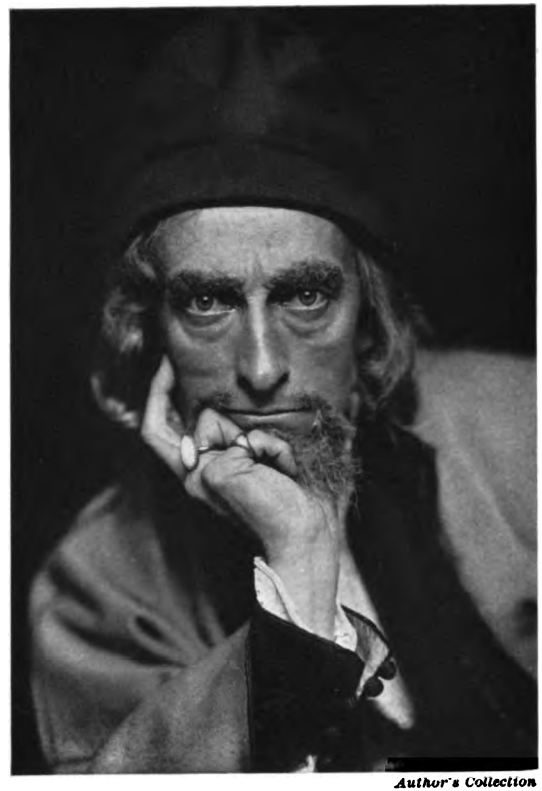

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JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON

AS

HAMLET ***SHYLOCK***

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optimistic view. On that point the testimony of his acting was explicit; and if there were any doubt of the fact his published statement would dispel it: "When I am well and *happy,* I *like* to play *Hamlet.*" No necessity exists that an actor should be in the actual condition, physical and mental, of the fictitious persons whom he assumes to represent. The actor is an artist; but the actor who, when particularly enjoying not only health, but *happiness,* turns with eager liking to the sombre task of embodying a man who is both distraught and miserable does not evince an acute cognizance of the *Hamlet* temperament or a natural sympathy with it.

Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* was alert, expeditious, and even resolute. He was grieved, but he was not desolate; dejected, but not hopelessly miserable; eccentric, because occasionally assumptive of "an antic disposition," but not, under the stress of anguish and horror, impelled into the border-land between sanity and derangement,—the haunted region through which, in Shakespeare's text, *Hamlet* intermittently moves, his "madness" being partly

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assumed and partly actual. In Forbes-Robertson's embodiment the "sovereign reason" which in *Hamlet* is terribly shocked, so that sometimes it becomes "Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh," remained invariably sovereign. The constitutional melancholy of *Hamlet,* predisposing him to suicide before he has seen the *Ghost* or been told of the murder of his father, and thus provided with an external, adequate impulse to mental distraction; the preordained, congenital, irremediable misery; the fatal weakness of will; the something *"within,* which *passeth* show,"—these, if indicated at all, were indicated by the circumstances displayed and the language spoken rather than by the acting. The texture of the exhibitive art was frequently beautiful, but the *Hamlet* was not an image of incarnated misery, such as is shown in Shakespeare's text.

Misery, a word which naturally comes into the mind at mention of *Hamlet,* is a strong word, but it is not strong enough fully to describe his condition, which is that of utter despair and, consequently, of wretchedness

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beyond relief. The text assures us that he once was the courtier, soldier, scholar,

> "The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mould of form,"

but when first we see him all that has passed. The world has become to him an

> ". . . unweeded garden
> That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
> Possess it merely,"

and from that moment onward he customarily shows, while vainly trying to act, that he is a sufferer, a person in excruciating grief, from which the only escape is death. Prior to the shock which he sustains in that awful "visitation" from the spiritual world nothing has occurred which should induce such a condition, or which could induce it, except in the case of a man temperamentally prone to gloom and preordained to sorrow. The death of a father, however dearly loved, is, as *King Claudius* sagely remarks, "as common as any the most

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vulgar thing to sense." The marriage of a widow to her defunct husband's brother, after less than two months of mourning, is indecent, but it is not so abnormal as to be an overwhelming shock to the brain; and neither of those occurrences provides an adequate motive for abject self-surrender and desolate misanthropy. *Hamlet* reacts on his circumstances, and the explanation of him must be sought in himself. He declares,—and the declaration is not made in mental derangement, actual or pretended,—that to him "the firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire," is "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors," and that to him, man, "in apprehension, how like a god!" is merely the "quintessence of dust." He is, in fact, utterly blighted. That is his chronic state, and it is the more piteous because of his inherent nobility, gentleness, and exquisite personal charm. That state is called "madness" by *Hamlet* and by persons who are associated with him, and so the word comes to be used by commentators who discuss the character. It is neither thought nor intimated, however, by anybody that *Hamlet* is

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a proper subject for a strait-jacket. "Madness" is only a word.

THE "MADNESS" OF *HAMLET*.

The actual, as contrasted with the pretended, disorder of *Hamlet's* mind, visible at various points after the real and agonizing delirium caused by the apparition, is particularly shown in the Prayer Scene. He has been enjoined by a voice from the spiritual world to revenge the murder of his father. He has become convinced by practical evidence of his own contriving,—"grounds more relative," as he considers, than the voice of the phantom,—that the crime was committed. Opportunity occurs for him to kill the murderer, and he draws his sword for that purpose. But the murderer is praying. "If I kill him now," so *Hamlet* reasons, paltering with the occasion, his soul will go to *heaven,* and that will not be *revenge.* I will wait until he is engaged in some kind of depravity, and then I will smite him, so that "his heels may kick at heaven," and his *soul,* "damn'd and black," be sent by me into eternal

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hell. Some Shakespeare scholars, of whom Forbes-Robertson is one, would maintain that the man who reasons in this diabolical way, devising, intending, and planning to procure the eternal damnation of an immortal soul, and who at the same time is intrinsically a noble person and a devout Roman Catholic Christian, must be regarded as absolutely and invariably sane! Others, on the contrary, perceiving that *Hamlet's* avowed motive and purpose are so horribly, infernally malignant as to be incompatible with sanity, would declare that he does not mean what he says, but, while remaining perfectly sane, only finds a pretext for not "acting your dread command," which he has sworn to obey,—and yet that he is all the while a strong person, of robust will, executive faculty, energy, and capability!

"Hamlet," considered abstractly as merely a play,—that is, solely with reference to the bones of its story, and aside from its golden thought, glorious imagery, profound, discriminative portrayal of human nature, and wonderfully beautiful language,—lacks vital interest.

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No particular charm attaches to either the love-affair of *Ophelia* or the intrigue of *Claudius* and *Gertrude*. The tremendous, everlasting vitality of the tragedy resides in its central character. That character is the image of finite man confronted with infinity, of man, "the paragon of animals," overwhelmed, dazed, and forlorn in his ever passionate and forever baffled, piteously futile effort to pierce the mystery of his spiritual environment.

There were many beauties in Forbes-Robertson's performance of *Hamlet*. It had become in frequent repetition a rounded, finished, beautiful work of art. It was the most poetic, sympathetic, and lovely embodiment of the part visible since the days of Edwin Booth; but the absence from it of at least a suggestion of the representative image of man, doubting, hoping, fearing, trembling, longing, despairing, on the dark verge of the unknown and the unknowable, of what may be oblivion or may be personal immortality, was the lack of a quality essential to the complete expression of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Meanwhile the actor's felici-

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tous method of displaying his ideal warranted the warmest admiration. His aspect was noble; his demeanor was princely; his manner, appropriately varying, according to the variations of occasion, was continuously correct and expressive. His voice, soft, gentle, melodious, was deeply charged with sadness. Throughout the First Act of the play, in which he was at his best, he maintained a complete illusion, and seemed indeed the perfect *Hamlet*. His countenance showed the nervous tension of an afflicted mind, the self-imposed fortitude that suffers in silence. His eyes were dull and dim. He moved wearily. The change from stagnant grief to thrilling excitement when told of the apparition was naturally wrought and with fine dexterity, except that during *Horatio's* account of the phantom,—"Two nights together had these gentlemen,"—he turned his back toward his audience, so that his face was concealed. In the First Scene on the platform of the watch his acting was superb. In every expression of his face and movement of his person, as he paced restlessly to and fro, his eyes search-

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ing the dusky midnight air, there was a thrilling sense of fearful expectation. His motion at "Look, my lord! it comes," when the *Ghost* glides into view, was perfect. It was slow, and as of a man frozen with awe and terror, and there was a low, long-drawn intake of his breath before he murmurs in a faint, appalled whisper, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" Throughout this tremendous scene, an ordeal that few actors have ever successfully passed, his acting was perfect, except that once he permitted himself,—at "Unhand me, gentlemen," etc.,—to turn his back upon the apparition. In the delirium of *Hamlet,* after the *Ghost* has spoken and vanished, he portrayed agonized distraction, hysterical excitement, and positive frenzy with a truth, a depth of emotion, a wealth of meaning, and an artistic skill such as, to my knowledge, he never displayed until in his latest presentments of the tragedy. It has seldom been equalled, and, in my observation, only twice excelled.

After the First Act of the play there was

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a singular change, and *Hamlet* was sane, practical, and executive, except for one splendid outburst,—after the soliloquy on life and death,—when, in the scene with *Ophelia,* the floodgates of restraint are broken, and the agonized *Prince* liberates the torrent of his seething passion, and pours forth the molten lava of his anguish, rage, bitterness, and scorn. At that point Forbes-Robertson's acting was magnificent, arousing warmly responsive emotion; but the immediate transit to colloquialism,—in the speaking of the counsel to the *Players,*—a transit made without change of scene or other indication of the lapse of time, largely detracted from the dramatic effect.

PECULIAR FEATURES.

In his cutting of the play and in his treatment of the central character Forbes-Robertson seemed to aim at celerity of continuous movement, an excellent merit, if judiciously obtained; but rapid movement does not atone for loss of consistency. His business in the killing of the concealed *Polonius,* while effective, was defi-

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cient in delirious impetuosity and tragic passion. He strongly accentuated *Hamlet's* love for *Ophelia,* whereas, according to the wretched *Prince's* conduct and language, his anguish and afflicting perplexity have borne him beyond love for woman, and he retains only a desolate memory of it, as of something beautiful that has passed away. The actor also made *Hamlet,* in the awful midnight interview with the *Queen,* exceedingly affectionate toward his mother, at one point fervently embracing her, a sinful, perhaps a criminal, woman, who certainly has forfeited all right to his filial tenderness, and who, as the text indicates, should be treated by him with austere severity.

On the English-speaking Stage it has long been customary to close the performance of the tragedy with *Hamlet's* death, the last words spoken being either the last that fall from the lips of *Hamlet,* "The rest is silence," or those of *Horatio,*

> "Good-night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!"

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That ending is pathetic, and it induces a sense of impressive solemnity. It should not, however, be forgotten that Shakespeare was not content to leave his subject at that point. He deemed it essential to signify that, notwithstanding the extinction of a noble being, the activities of the world continue, and to introduce the man of action, as distinguished from the man of thought. *Hamlet,* who has failed, passes away, loved and mourned, but also pitied; *Fortinbras,* who is successful, fills the scene. Forbes-Robertson closed the tragedy in practical conformity with the poet's design. *Hamlet,* having killed *Claudius* with the poisoned rapier, rushed to the vacant throne and died there. *Fortinbras* entered, and beheld him dead, the crown upon his knees. The corpse of *Hamlet* was then placed on an improvised bier and borne up by soldiers in a procession which was halted to make a stage-picture, over which the curtain fell. The last words spoken were the commonplace order of the military chieftain, "Go, bid the soldiers shoot." I hope lovers of Shakespeare who may chance to read

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these words will not deem the suggestion impious that this is anticlimax. *Hamlet,* dead, upon the throne of Denmark, is both pathetic and sublime; *Hamlet's* dead body being carried away to be prepared for his funeral is only commonplace stage mechanism.

"MICE AND MEN."

This fanciful comedy, deftly and prettily showing the truth of a familiar stanza by Burns, from which its title is derived, has been known to our Stage since January 19, 1908, when it was first acted in New York, John Mason and Annie Russell appearing in its principal characters. Its theme, like most themes, is old. Its construction and style show reminiscence of such dramatists as Susanna Centlivre and Hannah Cowley. The closing act of it is substantially a paraphrase of the conclusion of Dickens's novel of "Bleak House." It possesses, however, intrinsic merits, being animated with incident, gentle in sentiment, ardent in feeling, piquant in spirit, and provident of opportunity for good acting. It pleased when first shown

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here, and, as shown by Forbes-Robertson, it pleased even more than it did then. The chief person in it, *Mark Embury,* elderly, amiable, notional, quaint, a reclusive English gentleman and scholar, a silhouette of Dickens's *Jarndyce,* adopts as his ward a pretty girl from a foundling hospital, intending to educate her after a fashion of his own, and eventually to marry her. But there is a difference between May and December. The girl and her guardian's gay young nephew become lovers, and the good old bachelor's plan is defeated, as often happens with "the best laid schemes o' mice and men."

The part of *Mark Embury,* as acted by Forbes-Robertson, was made delightful by eccentric humor, lovable by sweetness of temperament, impressive by manliness and magnanimity in circumstances of afflicting trial, and pathetic by deep tenderness of feeling, naturally expressed. It would not be possible for any competent actor of large experience to fail of causing fine effect in this part. Forbes-Robertson's supreme advantage in it consisted in his

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exceeding graciousness of spirit and manner and his extraordinary capability of inspiring affectionate sympathy. It was truly said by Longfellow that "as the heart is, so is love to the heart," and since in the heart of this quaint gentleman, *Mark Embury,* there is no taint of selfishness, his love desires only to accomplish the happiness of its object. The dramatist, Mrs. Madeleine Lucette Ryley, has contrived scenes which felicitously show his gradual transit from the position of protective authority to that of hesitant, half-bewildered, adoring affection. He ends, after a brief, not unnatural, struggle with himself,—which, as indicated by Forbes-Robertson, was irresistibly affecting,—by uniting the young lovers, and so exemplifying the beauty of righteous self-sacrifice. A great charm of all Forbes-Robertson's acting was his use of the expedient of suggestion. At one point in his performance, when *Embury* has heard his ward *Peggy* humming the air of "My love is like a red, red rose," and has asked her to sing it to him, with the words, he made, without sound or motion, as he sat listening, an

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effect so beautiful that language cannot describe it; and this was made by suggestion, the eyes, and indeed the whole countenance, becoming a transparency to reveal the soul. Such moments, frequent with this actor and characteristic of his style, meant much, and were "close denotements" of his fine temperament and art.

"THE LIGHT THAT FAILED."

The facile blending of vitality and simplicity apparent in Forbes-Robertson's acting, when at its best, was conspicuous in his personation of *Dick Heldar,* in "The Light That Failed." The play is loosely jointed, diffuse, and at several points incredible; the character of *Heldar,* as embodied by Forbes-Robertson, was made exhibitive of the heroism which accepts disappointment without complaint and endures affliction with silent fortitude.

The action of this play is supposed to pass partly in the Sudan, mostly in London, with one scene laid in France. The atmosphere is that of a reputable Bohemia. *Heldar* is an

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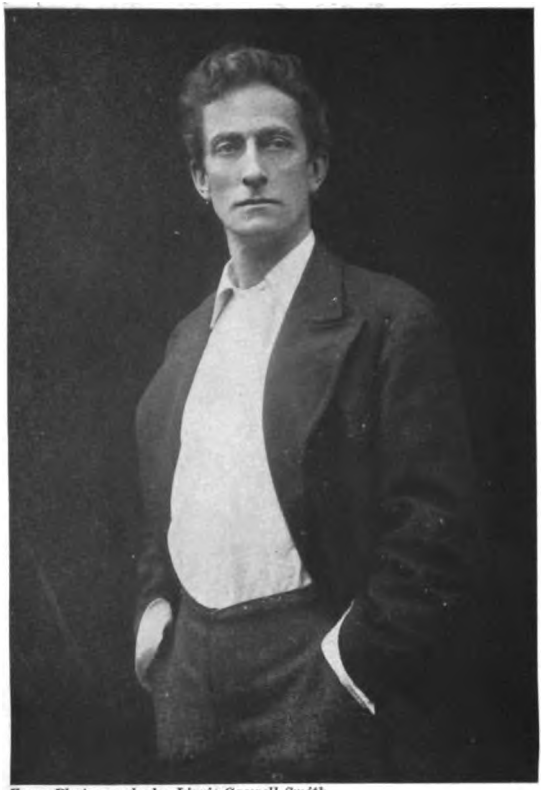

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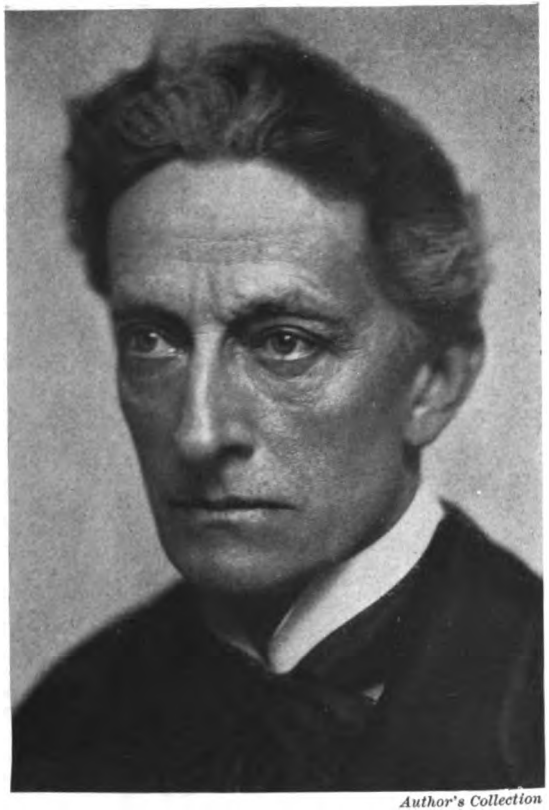

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JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON

AS

DICK HELDAR, IN "THE LIGHT THAT FAILED"

THE PASSER-BY, IN "THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK"

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artist, a rover, a man of romantic, generous disposition, but self-willed and wayward, as such men often are. When first seen he is associated with a military expedition. He has effected, at peril of his life, the rescue of a comrade in battle, and has been severely wounded in the head. He recovers, returns to London, and renews his acquaintance with a girl named *Maisie*, the companion of his childhood, of whom he has always been fond, and with whom he now finds himself to be passionately in love. The girl is drawn as self-absorbed, capricious, wishful to excel as a painter, and bent on what she calls "living her own life," a phrase that is frequent on the lips of inexperienced, vain young persons perversely determined to pursue a selfish course of conduct. *Maisie* rejects his offer of marriage, declaring that she must remain single and devote herself to the great work of painting a "Melancholia," a picture emblematic of Misery. Whereupon, having told her she does not possess the necessary ability, he avows his intention of doing the same thing,

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and excelling her in the doing of it; and so they part.

Heldar's condition at this point is that of a hopeless, saddened lover, striving, nevertheless, to be diligent, brave, and gay. He does not for some time become aware that his vision has been subtly injured by his wound and by his half-delirious insistence on prematurely uncovering his eyes and exposing them to the glare of the sunlit desert. He stimulates himself with whiskey, works on his purposed picture, and completes it; but his reckless misuse of his vision precipitates an inevitable catastrophe, and he becomes totally and permanently blind. The ordeal through which he passes, maintaining all the way a brave, sweet, manly spirit and unswerving, passionate fidelity to his first and only love, is the theme of the play. His picture, which he deems a masterpiece, is mutilated and ruined in a fit of rage by a girl of the streets whom he has sought to succor, employing her as a model, and whose endeavor to form an illicit, ruinous association with his nearest friend he has frustrated. Various auxiliar

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expedients diversify the movement of the play, and they are measurably pleasing, but the chief interest centres on the manner in which misfortune is borne and in the fine character displayed by the lovable young artist, so truly a gentleman, so cruelly wronged, so sadly tried, so stanch and true in affliction and sorrow.

With this type of manhood Forbes-Robertson's nature was seen to be acutely sympathetic, and since he possessed distinction, could temper movement with repose, and, guided by a fine instinct of artistic reticence, was never effusive, his embodiment of *Heldar* was a beautiful characterization, deeply affecting, and communicative of a noble ideal.

Several moments of exceeding great pathos occurred in the course of this performance that illustrated the actor's peculiar capability of causing strong effect by sudden manifestation of intense feeling and nervous force. When *Heldar* can no longer see, he supposes at first that the darkness is that of early nightfall; then, as a friend holds a burning match before his eyes, asking, "Can you see that?" he realizes

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that he is stone-blind. No one who saw Forbes-Robertson's action and heard his voice when he answered that question will forget the terrible sense of calamity that he infused into the words: "See! *See?* My God! I can't *see* anything!" nor the afflicting piteousness of the strong man's effort at self-control as he reached gropingly toward his comrade and faintly murmured: "Torpe, would—would you mind letting me hold your hand?" Later there comes a time when the blind artist, ignorant that his picture has been smeared and mangled, exultantly uncovers and reveals it to a frolicking group of his comrades as the crowning work into which he has put his whole life, and they dissemble their consternation and pity and proceed in their merry-making. Afterward, having been apprised of the ruin of his painting, he murmurs, "And *that 's* what I showed those men!" The heart must indeed be impervious that was not thrilled by the tone of Forbes-Robertson's voice when he spoke those words.

A kindred effect was caused when, toward the end of the play, *Heldar's* friend *Torpen-*

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how, who, after a considerable period of absence, has brought *Maisie* to him, hurries from the room, ostensibly to join the revellers, not having disclosed her presence, and the poor, blind creature, in his loneliness, whispers softly to himself the sorrowful line, "I think he might have given *me* five minutes!" The reconciliation of *Maisie* and *Heldar* follows, in a delicate, tender, deeply affecting colloquy, the blind lover at first repelling the girl's sweetly proffered love, which he believes to be only pity, and the girl at last making him understand and feel that she has always loved him and cannot "live her life" without him. Such incidents and proceedings, always affecting to the imagination, become insipid and merely mechanical when shown in ordinary acting; they were made signally expressive of fine traits in human nature under the influence of this actor and by his treatment of them. No tribute to Forbes-Robertson's personal magnetism and dramatic abilities, indeed, could be more significant than was the whole-hearted admiration that he won in "The Light That Failed," for certainly the

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play, when viewed with considerate eyes, is seen to be a thing of the veriest shreds and patches, owing everything to the soul with which he illumined and filled it.

SHAW'S "CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA."

In Shaw's play of "Cæsar and Cleopatra" fancy makes a free flight. The spirit is by turns serious, humorous, fantastic, and satirical. *Julius Cæsar* is portrayed as elderly, wise, arbitrary, imperious, sentimental, philosophic, bland, gentle, and playful. *Cleopatra* is drawn as a mere girl, physically handsome, temperamentally ingenuous; in character self-willed, ambitious, revengeful, and wantonly cruel; in manner sometimes impetuous, sometimes arch, piquant, and comically frank. In the fun of the play,—and, aside from the discordant incident of murder, it is full of fun,—there is a sub-acid flavor of scorn, half-bitter, half-derisive, for the innate weakness of human nature and the frequent folly of human conduct. The purpose of this mixture of incongruities, if truly it involved a purpose, aside from that of provid-

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ing a serviceable, remunerative vehicle for Forbes-Robertson's professional use, is to present famous historical persons in their guise of every day, emphasize the fact that they were only men and women, and, under cover of extravagance of delineation, satirize conventionality and at times such rational morality as is so unfortunate as to incur the author's contempt. "He uses his folly as a stalking horse, and under cover of that he shoots his wit."

In Forbes-Robertson's production of the play the purpose was merriment, and that purpose was delightfully accomplished. Once in a while, acting *Cæsar,* he struck a serious note, as in the apostrophe to the Sphinx, a passage which shows vigorous imagination, and in the eloquent speech, at once passionate and rueful, about the wickedness and ineffable fatuity of war. The thought is old, and has occurred to many minds; but it is a righteous thought, and Shaw has given fine expression to it. Forbes-Robertson uttered it with splendid fervor of conviction. His acting of *Cæsar,* however, was for the greater part playful. He evinced a

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keen sense of humor, and by archness of demeanor, quizzical facial expression, and piquant inflections of tone he often caused a delicious effect of delicate mirth. He was especially impressive, also, and therein showed consummate dramatic capability, at the moments when *Cæsar* ceases to be playful, and with inspiriting celerity vociferates his military commands. The personation was one that will long be remembered for its originality and dexterity of art, and still more for its denotement of personal authority, perfect mental poise, and lovely serenity of benignant, comprehending, tolerant, exalted spirit.

"THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK."

In his personation of *A Passer-by,* in Jerome's "idle fancy," "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," Forbes-Robertson provided a striking illustration of combined intellect, moral nature, and individual character. That fabric of colloquy (for, being devoid of action, it is not a play) illustrates the proposition that "There is a soul of goodness in things evil,"

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and declares that an appeal, made in a fraternal spirit, to the latent goodness in human nature will elicit a sympathetic response, and that human beings who, whether through vanity, weakness, selfishness, or the degrading pressure of adverse circumstances, have deflected from rectitude can be reclaimed by such an appeal. This doctrine may or may not be sound, but, whether veritable or fallacious, it is cheering and therefore salutary. Preaching, if we are to have it at all, should inculcate hope and belief, not fear and despair.

The *Passer-by* is an incarnation of the Messiah, the Anointed, the Christ, and the function prescribed for him in this piece is reclamation of errant humanity by celestial influence. He enters a household of which the members,—landlady, servant, and lodgers in a London lodging-house—are more or less mean, sordid, vulgar, selfish, vicious, wayward, or of unfixed principle, and at odds with themselves and their circumstances; and by assuming virtue to be latently existent in every one of them, and subtly and tactfully addressing "the better self" in

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each person, he rectifies the moral condition of that household, causing every member of it to become self-respecting, honest, considerate of others, contented, and happy.

The wonderful success of Forbes-Robertson in this essentially undramatic character was due almost exclusively to what he was—to the simplicity, sincerity, dignity, charitable spirit, candor, moral excellence, and exquisite refinement which were the primal constituents of his nature. The representative of the *Passer-by* is necessitated to cast the spell of his gentle sympathy and beneficent persuasion over eleven different types of human errancy, using the same means in each instance. In that situation the peril of monotony and insipidity is always impending, but Forbes-Robertson's treatment of it was so ingenious, various, and fervently sincere that every moment of its display was made interesting, and more than once I have seen a multitude of eager spectators held in almost breathless suspense by the charm of his personality and the apparently unconscious felicity of his art. Preceptive drama is chronically tedious.

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Morality in art should be suggestive, not didactic; but if all theatrical productions that are freighted with "lessons" could be interpreted as this one was by Forbes-Robertson, even preaching might become attractive.

"THE SACRAMENT OF JUDAS."

The action of this highly ingenious play, written in French by Louis Tiercelin, and tastefully "done into English" by that exceedingly expert dramatist Louis N. Parker, turns on two articles of Roman Catholic doctrine,—that a man once ordained a priest is a priest not for time only, but for eternity, and that the priestly character and the personal character are distinct from each other. The play is called "The Sacrament of Judas" because it involves the bestowal of a sacrament by a man who has endeavored to repudiate his apostolic duty; "and those whom Judas baptized were not baptized again."

Jacques Bernez, the principal person of the drama, is a priest in disguise. The priestly office has, he feels, virtually been forced upon

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him, and he shrinks from it, yet cannot wholly emancipate his conscience. He has never officiated as a priest, but, ceasing to be an ecclesiastic, in as far as his choice can affect his situation, on the very day of his ordainment has become a teacher, and has opened a little school in a secluded seaside village of Brittany. He lodges in the house of an old peasant, a fisherman, who has a granddaughter, young, innocent, and beautiful, and with the girl he has fallen in love. The peasant has loyally sheltered a young nobleman, the *Count of Kervern*, by birth the lord of the manor in which he lives, and this youth, proscribed and in danger of arrest and execution (the time is that of the French Revolution), has abused his protector's hospitality by winning the girl's love and effecting her seduction. The priest and the nobleman, while outwardly tolerant of each other, are instinctively antagonistic.

The play begins on a night when the *Count* is about to escape to a ship that has come for him and is waiting offshore. At a critical moment, when all seems secure, the house is

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invested by soldiers of the Republic, and a stern military representative of the people takes possession of it. The priest, in his assumed character of schoolmaster, is privately interrogated by that officer, and he tells his story, avowing his priesthood, explaining his scruples, and declaring his fealty to the Republic. The *Count,* in concealment, overhears this avowal, and when later his capture and ignominious death appear to be inevitable, and he shudders in mortal terror of dying without absolution, he adjures, and is able to compel, the priest to do his sacerdotal office. That is a new situation in drama, and it is one deeply fraught with tragedy and pathos. With the hackneyed figure of the fugitive French aristocrat, in peril of seizure and butchery by the sanguinary red republican, although in this instance he is used in such a way as to excite and sustain anxious suspense, the observer is not much concerned, but with the wretched priest, torn by contending passions, whose sense of a sacred duty obliges him to hear the confession of the man whom he recognizes as a rival, and thus to

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learn of the seduction of the girl whom he fondly loves, and then to absolve the penitent from all sin, it is impossible not to feel the deepest sympathy.

Forbes-Robertson's impersonation of *Bernez* was in a remarkable degree expository of his temperament and the quality of his art. He made the priest highly intellectual, passionate, earnest, simply heroic, and naturally picturesque. His care-worn visage was sadly expressive of perplexity and mental pain. His manner was strikingly dramatic. In conversation with the aristocrat it was marked by a circumspect reserve, which, while entirely courteous, signified distrust and latent aversion; toward the old peasant *Guillou* it was friendly and considerate; toward the republican soldier *Chapin* it was bold, manly, and, while antipathetic, formally polite; toward the girl *Jeffik* it was gentle, solicitous, propitiatory, and protective. This discriminative, scrupulous, exact preservation of suitably various manner in speaking and in listening to different persons was one of the prime felicities of Forbes-Robertson's art, and

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in this personation it was finely shown. Beneath it the haunting trouble of the mind, incident to the struggle between aversion to the priesthood and conscientious conviction that it should not be shunned and that there is no escape from it, made itself continuously obvious. The transition from violent anger to iron self-control, when *Bernez* has discovered the mutual attachment of the nobleman and the peasant girl and checks his impetuous purpose to denounce his rival, was made with wonderful skill. His demeanor in the awful scene of the confessional was solemnly impressive, the moral grandeur of the priest nobly prevailing over the enraged resentment of the vitally injured human being. *Bernez* has determined that the *Count* shall escape with *Jeffik*. He contrives to insure their safety, joins their hands, and declares that God will direct what should be done. Forbes-Robertson's execution of the stage business at this point, while extremely simple, was in spirit and effect so beautiful as to beggar description. *Jeffik* kisses his right hand; the *Count* kisses his left; he blesses them;

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they hasten away, and the heartbroken man is left alone. He slowly bows his head, places one hand over the other, and reverently and tenderly kisses the place the girl has kissed. Then the end comes quickly. *Chapin* enters with his soldiers. *Bernez,* who has put on his priestly garb, says simply, "I have saved myself from myself, and I have saved him from you."

"Then take your reward!" cries the infuriated officer. His soldiers level their muskets.

"God have mercy on me, a sinner!" exclaims *Bernez,* and as the weapons are discharged he falls dead.

SHYLOCK.

Forbes-Robertson's performance of *Shylock,* a part to which he was singularly unsuited, made no important addition to the histrionic gallery of dramatic figures. It was a technically proficient product of executive skill, correct, but otherwise uninteresting. It was not, and did not pretend to be, an embodiment of an austere and holy Hebrew, incarnating the lofty spirit of "our sacred nation" and admin-

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istering retributive justice as the vicegerent of Jehovah, and therein it was faithful to Shakespeare's text. It rightly represented the *Jew* as a crafty, malignant villain, whose purpose is the murder of a man whom he hates, and whose means, in pursuit of that purpose, are hypocrisy, treachery, and an inveterately malignant will.

Shakespeare's *Shylock* is at heart a murderer, and not the less so because he has abundant reason for hatred of the enemy who has grossly insulted him and whom he wishes to kill. He is an austere bigot in his religion, and he hates *Antonio* "for he is a Christian," but he hates him *more,* and specifically says so, because *Antonio* "lends out money *gratis,*" thus reducing "the rate of usance" in Venice; in other words, interferes with the business of usury. His intention is not the vengeance which might come to seem righteous in the mind of a fanatic; it is a cruel and bloody murder, as his words distinctly prove:

"If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him."

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Again he says, "I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit"; to which statement of intention he immediately adds, by way of fully illuminating his reason, "for were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will!"

That view of the character was taken by Forbes-Robertson, who understood and so displayed it. There was, however, lack of intensity and vitality in his acting of this part, and therefore little if any illusion was created. Exposition took the place of impersonation. The elocutionary art was usually fine. The apostrophe to *Antonio,* "Many a time," etc., was exceedingly well spoken. The passionate, expostulatory tirade, in the stormy street scene, "Hath not a Jew eyes?" etc., was uttered with much vehemence and was moderately effective. All the theatrical values of the part were indicated, but the performance did not carry conviction of reality, did not create an image of potent wickedness, nor did it show, in the face and person of the *Jew,* the ravaging effect of evil passions burning and surging in the mind. Forbes-Robertson's arrangement of the play,

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moreover, was not judicious, because it caused a general effect of confusion and haste, and, to considerate attention, rendered some of the movements of the characters motiveless and illogical. His make-up for *Shylock* was peculiar, and for that reason notable. He made him a bowed and gray-bearded man, aged more than sixty, having a large "moth-spot" on one cheek, and lacking one front tooth. He attempted no originality of stage business, except that, adopting Irving's finely expressive invention of *Shylock's* return to his home after *Jessica's* elopement, he spoiled it by excess of elaboration.

The exit of *Shylock* from the courtroom was novel, but the meaning of it was dubious. After saying,

> "I pray you, give me leave to go from hence.
> I am not well,"

he seemed to collect his strength by an almost superhuman effort of the will and, maintaining a proudly erect attitude, moved toward the door, while *Gratiano* was uttering his insolent gibes. But this taunting Christian, when he

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confronted the *Jew,* became impressed and abashed, drew aside, and *Shylock* in a portentous manner passed out of sight. The exit *seemed* intended to imply an immediately impending demise either through mental anguish or by suicide. In either case, *if* correctly so understood, an assumption of *Shylock's* present death after his defeat is arbitrary and unjustifiable. Forbes-Robertson omitted from his version of the play the lines in the last act which show that *Shylock* did not die, but lived to sign the bond demanded of him, and that he was alive at the end of the play.

OTHELLO.

Othello was included in Forbes-Robertson's repertory for about seventeen years. His first performance of it in America was given at the Shubert Theatre, New York, on December 15, 1913. Among his many Shakespearean impersonations this one was, for specific reasons, the best. At certain points, indeed, it lacked the tremendous tragic power, emotional and physical, which is essential for complete expression

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JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON

AS

JULIUS CÆSAR. IN "CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA" — *OTHELLO*

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of *Othello's* frenzy when jealousy, contending with love and finally overmastering it, has convulsed his brains and broken his heart; but in ideal it was faithful to the poet's conception of the character, and in execution it clearly, smoothly, fluently, and, in general, adequately embodied and expressed that ideal. At those points where the actor fell short of the fulfilment of his design he nevertheless made that design distinctly apparent, leaving no room for doubt that he comprehended in every particular *Othello's* character, experience, passion, agony, and madness. No personation which is even approximately true of this tortured, distracted, suffering man can be otherwise than poignantly distressing to those who understand it, but if the part must be played, there is a kind of comfort and relief in seeing it played as the protagonist in a poetic tragedy.

A good way in which to arrive at a sound judgment of a dramatic impersonation is to obtain an answer to these two questions, Is the actor's ideal of the character he assumes accordant with the author's conception of that char-

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acter as manifested in his text? and Does the actor fully, competently, and effectively embody and express that ideal? *Othello* has been performed by various actors and in various ways. It is for the student of this subject to consider how he is drawn by Shakespeare, and how he should be represented. On our Stage he has sometimes been shown as a veneered barbarian. He was notably so shown by the great Italian actor Tomasso Salvini, who made him distinctly animal; a huge person, plebeian in quality, overbearing in demeanor, of a fierce, excitable temper, readily suspicious, carnal in his love, a bully toward *Cassio,* his dearest friend; a ferocious ruffian in his assault on *Iago* (his "business" was to hurl that officer to the floor and offer to stamp on his head), and in the scene, intended by the author to be a sacred one, of the killing of *Desdemona,* a tigerish brute. That ideal was entirely and magnificently embodied, convulsing the multitude with fear, horror, and nervous excitement, and, after many years since it was first seen in New York (September 16, 1873), persons who remember

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Salvini's *Othello*,—and others who never saw it, —still proclaim its perfection, and are amazed, if not horrified, that anybody should demur to that entirely erroneous opinion. Yet in Shakespeare's text *Othello* is drawn as a scion of royalty, a gentleman, a soldier, simple, generous, confiding, "of a free and open nature," "all in all sufficient," self-centred, majestic, "the nature whom passion could not shake," a man "not easily jealous"; the true lover, reverent of womanhood, human and ardent, yet one in whom spiritualized devotion has subdued the eager impulse of desire ("the young effects in me defunct"), and this grand creature is ensnared to his ruin by a man of great intellect, accomplished, specious, of infernal malignity, a human fiend, garbed with the loveliness of honesty and the charm of genial comradeship and candor, and using means that might well deceive a much wiser person than his victim.

Forbes-Robertson took this impeccable view of *Othello* and impersonated the representative lover, the simple, noble, magnanimous gentleman; the intrepid soldier; a being of intrinsic,

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absolute, unalloyed goodness. His love for *Desdemona* was not animal. There was a lofty chivalry in it, a sweet, gentle, protective tenderness, commingling humility with ardor. The supreme utterance of perfect love, in the beautiful speech beginning, "It gives me wonder great as my content," was spoken from the soul, with all its ecstasy of feeling and all its significance of devotion. No woman drawn by Shakespeare is loved as *Desdemona* is loved by *Othello,* or, if there is a parallel, the depth and quality of the passion is less clearly and forcibly denoted. Forbes-Robertson's performance excelled particularly in the expression of a love so holy and so profound that the revolt from it into jealousy must inevitably result first in madness and then in desperation. To the complete manifestation and utterance of that most dreadful and deadly of human passions the actor was somewhat inadequate. The fury of *Othello,* engendered by an insidious, hellish instillation of evil belief, foul thought, and malignant hatred, was made in effect more pathetic than terrific, whereas the

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two attributes, pathos and terror, should be equal in the expression of it. Forbes-Robertson found himself unequal to the strain of that vast passion of inexorably determined vengeance which surges through the tremendous speech, "Like to the Pontic Sea," and he cut it, going from "Never, Iago, never," to "Now by 'yond marble Heaven." On the other hand, the awful agony of distraction in *Othello's* pivotal scene with *Iago*, at

". . . By the world,
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not,"

was expressed with a sincerity of passion and suffering and a felicity of art such as no actor of the part within the last sixty years, on our Stage, has surpassed, and which few have equalled,—and I remember them all, from Forrest onward. The treatment of the exacting scene of the reception of *Ludovico*, with *Othello's* fluctuations between efforts at self-control and surges of consuming rage, his bitterness, violence, and final outburst of almost maniacal loathing, was perfect. Finally, the

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killing of *Desdemona* was done not as a murder, but as "a sacrifice," according to the distinct prescription of the poet's words. In short, *Othello* was embodied by Forbes-Robertson without adherence in any respect to an erroneous tradition of mere brawny muscularity, sensuality, and ferocity, and therein it was true to the author and was a great work of art.

A TRIBUTE OF FRIENDSHIP.

Johnston Forbes-Robertson has retired from the Stage in the maturity of his histrionic powers, at the summit of his achievement, and in the fulness of his fame. His career, extending over a period of more than forty years, has been marked by devotion to a high ideal, conscientious service to a great art, continuous intellectual labor, and beneficent influence upon Society. The historian of the Theatre may well delight to honor him. Our first meeting occurred in England, in 1885, and our friendship, which then began, and which is greatly prized by me, has ever since endured. In the foregoing estimate of his acting and his per-

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sonality I have endeavored so to picture him that he may remain a definite, vital figure for the reader in future times. The esteem and affection with which his memory is cherished not only by me but by many other friends in America found expression,—earnest and sincere, however inadequate,—in a speech and poem which I delivered at the Lotos Club, when he was entertained there, April 2, 1910, and which may fitly conclude this memorial:

There was a time when, perhaps, I might have succeeded in attempting to pay an adequate tribute to the fine artistic and beneficent achievement of Johnston Forbes-Robertson. That achievement has long been well known to me, and I have long held it in the highest esteem. I should be glad and grateful if, at this moment, I could express that esteem in potent, fervid, moving eloquence; but while the feelings of age are deep the expression of them is difficult. My meaning is very earnest. My words must be few.

The dramatic artist whose range is so wide

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that it extends from *Chastelard* to *Scarpia*, from *Jeremy Diddler* to *Arthur Dimmesdale*, from *Buckingham* to *Benedick*, from *Lysander* to *Leontes*, from *Orlando* to *Romeo* and from *Mercutio* to *Hamlet*,—the dramatic artist who has played all those parts, and many others, playing all of them thoroughly well and some of them greatly,—needs no assurance, from any source, that he stands in the front rank of intellectual actors. Such is the professional position of the distinguished guest who, on this interesting occasion, affords to us the privilege of doing honor to the dramatic art and of doing credit to our judgment and taste by doing honor to him.

I have known Forbes-Robertson, as actor, painter, editor, critic (and a very good one), and, if I may venture so to say, personal friend, for a quarter of a century. He is a much younger man than I am. He belongs to a generation later than mine. But as an actor he was educated in the methods of the Old School, —that school with which all of my long life I have been, in a certain sense, associated, and

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which now, I believe, it is somewhat customary to disparage; and I think that he will not widely dissent from my opinion that his present noble eminence in the dramatic profession, while largely due to his brilliant inherent powers, is also partly due to the splendid early training that he received in the ways of that Old School.

For Forbes-Robertson, as it happened, was taught by honest, sturdy, genuine, thorough-going old Samuel Phelps, the stalwart veteran chieftain of "The Wells," a man who conducted a first-class theatre in London for nineteen years; who successfully produced thirty-three of the thirty-seven plays of Shakespeare, who acted almost all of the great tragic and many of the great comic parts in the old legitimate English drama; whose range was so wide that it touched *Macbeth* at the one extreme and *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant* at the other; who finally surpassed Charles Kean (not an easy thing to do, as I can testify, because I saw that actor often and studied him well) and who held his ground, for years and until the end, as the admitted rival of Macready—the most

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potential and formidable intellect that appeared on the English-speaking Stage between the time of the memorable John Philip Kemble and the time of the illustrious Henry Irving. Such a student as Forbes-Robertson, guided by such a teacher as Samuel Phelps, must have learned his art; and Forbes-Robertson has given ample proof that he did learn it, and that he learned it in the fullest sense of the word.

I have no sympathy with any form of bigotry, and especially I repudiate the bigotry that would unduly extol the Past in order, by invidious comparison, to depreciate and disparage the Present. Nevertheless, when I contemplate the condition of the contemporary Stage,—a condition which I know to be, in some respects, degraded and deplorable, but which I believe to be temporary,—I am impelled to cling, with a tenacity which I cannot deem unreasonable, to my stanch preference for that older—and better—school of acting, in which impersonation and elocution were equally cultivated and exemplified, and for that affectionate, romantic popular feeling relative to the Stage, which

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once was widely diffused, but which is dormant now.

I might mention many names of actors of that Old School, actors eminent in my earlier time, all now dead and gone, and, mostly, forgotten, whose places have never been filled. Placide, Burton, Blake, Murdock, Gilbert, Warren, Wallack, Forrest, Booth, Hackett, Brooke, Davenport, Owens, Jefferson, Florence, Fisher, Lewis—those are only a few of them—and I might mention, also, the significant fact that the best actors on our Stage to-day, such as James O'Neill, John Mason, Otis Skinner, E. H. Sothern, Robert Mantell, and Forbes-Robertson, are survivals of an earlier time or heirs to the old faith. What was the charm of those old actors? The charm was, in one word, Poetry. They had defects, no doubt; nothing in the world is absolutely perfect; but they cherished ideals; they did lovely things, because they loved to do them. They wrought in an atmosphere of romance, and they found a ready response in the romantic enthusiasm of the public. Is that charm prevalent now? Is

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that atmosphere of romance apparent, to any considerable extent, upon the Stage, or in front of it, to-day? And, if not, why not? Why is it absent? This is the same glorious world. The sun still rises in majesty and sets in splendor. Still the south wind breathes "upon a bank of violets, stealing and giving odor." Human nature exists unchanged. Every impulse of goodness, every instinct of kindness, every aspiration to nobility, is vital in the soul. Youth, innocence, virtue, and heroism are as much in the world to-day as ever they were! Art is still potential. Genius is still sublime. And still the fires of love and hope and faith are glowing with immortal splendor on the living altars of the human heart!

Much is heard from time to time of "the Independent Theatre," "the Drama of Ideas," "Naturalistic Literature,"—whatever that may be,—and a peculiar foggy efflorescence of diseased mentality called "New Thought." Inspection of those fads discovers that their advocates are desirous to be "emancipated" from something. The nature of their fetters is

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ambiguous, but apparently they are wishful to be "emancipated" from the trammels of duty, morality, and decency. I believe that the whole fabric of those fads is rank and mischievous folly. Pure literature, like pure air and pure water, was found long ago, and it has not been and it never will be superseded by any new discovery. In honoring Forbes-Robertson, which I do with all my heart, I once more testify my allegiance to that established principle and immovable standard.

My labor, like my life, is drawing toward a close. It has, from first to last, been devoted to one service,—to the Ministry of Beauty. That is the consummate agency of civilization, and that should be the supreme purpose of all art. Whatever I have read or thought or seen or known of the Beautiful I have wished should predominate as an impulse, imperial and absolute, over the lives of the men and women of my time. When I have roamed in the storied places of the Old World; when I have listened to the silver chimes of Heidelberg, or paused in the classic groves of Oxford and

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Cambridge and seen the solemn shrines and stately temples that rise so glorious upon those luxuriant, incomparable lawns; when I have mused in the haunted gloom of gray old Winchester Cathedral, austerely magnificent and reverend with the memories of a thousand years; when I have lingered, awe-stricken, in the shadow of massive Canterbury, while the green ivy was trembling on its gray, wind-beaten walls, and the rooks were hovering above it, and the glory of the western sun was flooding its great windows, and the music of the throbbing organ within its bosom seemed like a voice from heaven,—then, deep in my heart, I have felt the passionate desire,—always present with me, if not always aflame,—that the celestial influence of Beauty, before which sin is impossible and wrong and sorrow disappear, might be more and more communicated to my land and made perpetual to bless my people. That influence is peculiarly vested in the mission of the Actor and in the native function of the Stage. That influence has been at once the inspiration and the accomplishment of the noble

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actor around whom you are assembled now, and to whom I pay, as best I can, my humble tribute:

To him whose charm of magic art
Has made ideal beauty live,
To soothe the mind and cheer the heart,
What shall we give?

What *can* we give to feed his flame
Of joy in these victorious days,
But tender love and true acclaim
And grateful praise?

He came as comes in woodland dell
The earliest violet of the year,
That tells, yet hardly seems to tell,
That spring is here.

Sweet, modest, gentle, simple, true,
His art pursued one clear design,—
By power and pathos to subdue,
And to refine.

He nursed no envy, sought no strife
With worldlings for the world's applause,
But only nobly gave his life
To Beauty's cause.

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So year by year his fair renown
An ever-widening circle spread,
Thick sewn with amaranth to crown
His royal head.

Still may he move in that white fame
Genius and Truth alone possess,
And every voice that speaks his name
Speak but to bless!

Full be the tide and free the flow
Of fortune while his years increase,
And over all the sunset glow
Of perfect peace!

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IX.

EDWARD HUGH SOTHERN.

1859—19—.

MANY years ago, in the course of a familiar conversation at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, my old friend Edward A. Sothern, that remarkable comedian once famous as *Lord Dundreary,* spoke to me rather ruefully about his son Edward, then a pupil at an academy in England, and showed me a letter from the youth signifying that either he had been, or was about to be, dismissed from school for neglect of his studies. It was a bright letter, written in a blithe spirit, and it was embellished with a comical pen-and-ink drawing, by the writer, in which appeared an open door, a flight of steps, and a boyish figure, with outstretched arms, plunging forward through the air, from the energetic impulse of a large booted foot and leg thrust forth immediately behind him.

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"Kicked out," Sothern said, half smiling, yet gravely, "and I suppose that boy will never do any good." Thirty-four years have passed since the comedian was laid in his grave (1881) in Southampton Cemetery, and that boy, Edward Hugh Sothern, as the result of an artistic career longer, more varied, and more conspicuous than that of his father, is one of the most popular actors on the American Stage, distinguished in comedy and romantic drama and successful in the realm of tragedy,—which his brilliant father attempted in vain.

The elder Sothern was an Englishman, born in Liverpool in 1826, and he began his professional career in his native land, coming to America in 1852, and thereafter, for nearly thirty years, parting his time unequally between America and Europe. The younger Sothern is an American, born at No. 79 Bienville Street, New Orleans, December 6, 1859, and although he has acted abroad, his fame and fortune have been gained on the American Stage, to which he belongs and of which he is a conspicuous ornament. In youth, after leaving school, Sothern

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E. H. SOTHERN, ABOUT 1880

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chose painting as a profession, and for a while pursued the study of that art in Europe; but the Stage allured him, and presently, resolving to become an actor, he joined his father's theatrical company in America. His first professional appearance was made in New York, September 18, 1879, at the Park Theatre, then managed by Henry E. Abbey, and he has been on the stage almost continuously ever since. The announcement, however, has been made that the theatrical season of 1915-'16 will be his last; that he and his wife, the beautiful Julia Marlowe, charming as an actress and admired and beloved as a woman, will, after a comprehensive farewell tour, retire from the stage.

A FRIGHTENED NOVICE.

Sothern's first part was that of *A Cabman,* in the farce of "Brother Sam," produced by his father. I saw the performance and sympathized with the novice, who was overcome by stage-fright and unable to speak. He remained only a short time in his father's employment. From the New York Park he went to the Bos-

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ton Museum, remaining there about three months. Later he joined John McCullough's dramatic company, and under the wise and kind direction of that great actor he gained valuable experience. In the autumn of 1881 he was in England, where he remained for about eighteen months, performing intermittently in London and the provinces. In 1883 he rejoined McCullough's company in America. The next season found him associated with the English actress Helen Barry, playing *Tresham,* in a drama called "The Fatal Letter." He then undertook a starring tour, his first venture of that ambitious kind, and produced a farcical play entitled "Whose Are They?" adapted by himself from an English original, in which he acted the chief part, *Melchizedek Flighty.* In this enterprise he failed. For several years thereafter he performed in association with Helen Dauvray, who managed the New York Lyceum Theatre, then in Fourth Avenue, before that house came into the control of Daniel Frohman. Later he was the leading man at the Lyceum under Daniel Froh-

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man's management, and there he remained for many years, playing various parts and steadily advancing in professional skill and in repute till he became, practically, a star, supported by the Lyceum company. In 1899 he left that theatre, and, setting forth at the head of his own dramatic company, with Miss Virginia Harned, whom he had married, as leading woman, he produced "The King's Musketeer," a new play on the basis of the ever-popular novel "The Three Guardsmen," by Dumas, and personated *D'Artagnan.* This venture was successful, and from that time onward Sothern's progress was rapid. Within the ensuing year he presented "The Song of the Sword," "The Sunken Bell," and "Drifting Apart," in which he gave a capital personation, as *Sir George Bloomfield.* On September 17, 1900, at the Garden Theatre, New York, he made the most ambitious and most important effort of his professional life, appearing for the first time as *Hamlet.* Within the next three years he many times repeated that performance, and he diversified his repertory by producing "Richard Lovelace," "If I

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Were King," by Justin H. McCarthy; "Markheim," and "The Proud Prince."

ALLIANCE WITH JULIA MARLOWE.

In 1904 a professional combination was effected, by Charles Frohman, betwcen Sothern and Julia Marlowe, and on September 19 of that year they acted together for the first time, appearing at the Illinois Theatre, Chicago, in "Romeo and Juliet." This alliance continued till June, 1907, after which time, for two years, each of them headed a distinct company; but in 1909 their association was resumed, and on November 8, that year, when the New Theatre, now (1915) called the Century, was opened in New York, they appeared in the central parts of Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra." Their stay at the New Theatre was brief. Since then they have acted together continuously except when Miss Marlowe has been incapacitated by illness. On April 22, 1907, they appeared at the Waldorf Theatre, London, and there they remained for five weeks. On August 11, 1911, in London, they were married,—Soth-

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ern and his first wife having meantime been divorced. Within the period from 1904 to 1915 Sothern and Julia Marlowe have coöperated in productions of "Romeo and Juliet," "Much Ado About Nothing," "The Taming of the Shrew," "The Merchant of Venice," "Twelfth Night," "Jeanne d'Arc," "John the Baptist," "Antony and Cleopatra," and "Macbeth," and they have effected revivals of "The Sunken Bell" and "When Knighthood Was in Flower." The latter play was originally brought out by Miss Marlowe in 1901, and commercially it proved one of the most remunerative of her many ventures. While acting independently in the interval between the summer of 1907 and the autumn of 1909, Sothern presented "The Fool Hath Said There Is No God," "Our American Cousin," "Don Quixote," and "Richelieu."

EARLY ENVIRONMENT.

At the time when Sothern's career began some of the best actors of the nineteenth century were in the zenith of their popularity, and

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the American Theatre was rich in dramatic attractions. Edwin Booth was sovereign in Tragedy and Joseph Jefferson in Comedy. Lester Wallack, at the head of his splendid company, was still regnant at Wallack's Theatre, though Augustin Daly, after ten years of determined enterprise, had established a successful rivalry. Lawrence Barrett and John McCullough were eminent in public favor. The star of Mary Anderson had risen. Fanny Janauschek was maintaining the grand tradition of Charlotte Cushman and Adelaide Ristori. Mrs. Bowers had not left the stage which she had never ceased to illumine. Dion Boucicault, with his lovely little play of "Kerry" and his excellent representative Irish drama of "The Shaughraun," was on the crest of the wave. The beautiful Helena Modjeska was winning her way to renown. John Gilbert, John E. Owens, John T. Raymond, William J. Florence, John S. Clarke, George Fawcett Rowe, Charles Walter Couldock, and Frank Mayo were prominent among players whose names were household words. The sprightly, pleas-

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ing little Lotta, that piquant compound of child, woman, and elf, had not retired. Clara Morris, Fanny Davenport, Mrs. Scott-Siddons, Adelaide Neilson, and Rose Coghlan were reigning favorites. Sarah Bernhardt, Salvini, and Rossi, representing the methods of the European Continental Theatre, were making their artistic appeal to our playgoing audiences. It was a time favorable to young ambition, because the art of acting was observed and highly esteemed by a considerable public, and although the craving for novelty,—a craving which has always existed,—was as eager as ever, talent was more highly prized than freakish trash, and the actor devoted to a noble ideal could more confidently than now expect sympathy and encouragement. The influences about Sothern at the outset were propitious, and he profited by them. In other words, he started right, and although he has occasionally condescended to minister to contemporary appetite for fads, as a whole his career has been governed and shaped by a conscientious, intellectual, resolute purpose to enroll himself among the foremost representa-

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tives of legitimate drama in his time. That purpose he has fulfilled. As a leading man and as a stock star he labored earnestly, and often with brilliant effect, in the parts then assigned to him. As an independent star he ventured boldly, neither checked nor disheartened by any adversity of critical opinion, and never fearful of taking a risk. The formation of his alliance with Julia Marlowe, prompted by that of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, greatly aided his advancement. Without it he probably would not have reached the authoritative professional eminence which he now occupies; but in the main he has made his way by his talent and energy, and he owes his success to his patient labor and dogged perseverance. From the first he valued himself highly, and he appears to have known, and to have consistently acted on his knowledge, that in order to hit a high mark you must always aim at the highest.

A VARIOUS REPERTORY.

The history of the Stage in every country and every period provides abundant evidence that

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every actor operates within certain limits, in each case susceptible of specification, and, for the student of acting, instructive to consider. The performer of several hundred parts, creditable in each of them, will usually be found to be supremely fine in only a few. Garrick and Mrs. Siddons, among actors of the past concerning whom we all can read, and Edward L. Davenport and Henry Irving, among modern actors whom some of us remember, can rightly be named among the marvels of versatility who, all exceptions being allowed, remained at the last equally fine in an unusual number of characters. Sothern's repertory, while for multiplicity of parts it will not bear comparison with those of the players thus named, or with those of Burton, Gilbert, Warren, Lester Wallack, Henry Placide, and Clara Fisher, is nevertheless extensive, imposing, and significant. It comprises about 125 parts, including many that exhibit a striking contrast: *Hamlet* and *Lord Chumley; Romeo* and *Wildrake; Macbeth* and *Lord Dundreary; Shylock* and *Ernest Vane;* Shakespeare's *Antony* and

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Captain Lettarblair; Benedick and *Don Quixote; Malvolio* and *D'Artagnan; Petruchio* and *Claude Melnotte; Richelieu* and *Jack Hammerton,* and *Richard Lovelace* and *François Villon.* This list suggests capability of impersonation extending over a remarkably wide range of character. Sothern has not shown equal competence in all the parts that he has played; if he had he would be indeed a prodigy. To some of them he proved inadequate; his *Wildrake,* for example, a part slight enough at the best, was a caricature; but he has exhibited exceptional general efficiency. The realm in which he has most naturally, and therefore most freely, moved is that in which light comedy is commingled with romance.

FORMATIVE PERIODS.

Sothern's career naturally divides itself into two periods: the first that of general growth, preparation, and experience, extending from his novitiate in 1879 to his establishment as one of the leading actors of the American Stage, about twenty years later; the second that of the

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period of more than fifteen years from 1899 to the present time.

In the first period of his career, though the parts that Sothern played were far more numerous than those that he played in the second period, they were invariably slighter, sometimes being absolutely trivial, and they covered not only a lower, but a narrower, range of character than those which he acted in his maturity. *Harrington Lee,* in Bronson Howard's "Met by Chance"; *André de Latour,* in "Walda Lamar"; *Wildrake,* in "The Love Chase"; *Jack Hammerton,* in "The Highest Bidder"; *Chumley, Guisebury, Lettarblair, Rassendyl*—all these, and others substantially like them, are not the possible mediums of great dramatic art, even for a comedian, no matter how agreeable a proficient actor may make them as entertainment. The total achievement of Sothern during the first twenty years of his professional life is justly summarized as the development and practical perfection of a distinct, authoritative, crisp style, not unique, but neat, expert in mechanism, and felicitous in assumption of

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nonchalant, lackadaisical demeanor. Some of the ingredients of that style were a peculiar aptness in situations of comic perplexity; the capability of acting, as in *Hammerton,* in a mood of earnest feeling overlaid with superficial sparkle, and pleasing,—even though sometimes touched with burlesque; strikingly effective, because seemingly unconscious, humor; and the charm of repose. At the end of the first period of his career Sothern had become not only a popular, but a remarkably good though not a predominantly admirable, actor. In such parts as *De Launay,* in "An Enemy to the King," he moved with delightful precision and authority, manifesting himself sympathetic to grasp and adequate to express ideals compounded of youth, adventurous spirit, courage, gallantry, chivalrous sentiment, and romantic feeling. Yet even in the field of romantic drama he somewhat lacked the grand manner, the large, broad gesticulation, and the clear, copious, scrupulously correct delivery which cause perfect illusion, and therefore make romance seem reality.

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A SIGNIFICANT EARLY SUCCESS.

In the first period of Sothern's career, among the most significantly indicative of his personations was one little regarded at the time and since, apparently, forgotten,—his skilful and touching assumption of *Regan,* in "The Disreputable Mr. Regan," a short play written by Richard Harding Davis, first produced at the Lyceum Theatre in November, 1892. *Regan* is a criminal, and as such is pursued. He unwittingly kills his pursuer, and then takes refuge in a garret of an uninhabited tenement-house, where he finds a little child who is dying of starvation. The spectacle of this poor and helpless creature's wretched condition awakens his benevolence, and notwithstanding that he is almost wild with terror he tries to help the sufferer. In the course of his ministrations, which are kind, but ineffectual, he hears the cry of a newsboy, who is offering the evening papers for sale in the street, and thus learns that he is proclaimed a murderer and that the police are seeking him. He determines to effect

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his escape, if possible, but his pity for the miserable child is so great that he cannot bring himself to leave the place, although he is in imminent peril. Looking from the window, he sees police officers. For a moment he wavers between the urgent impulse to fly and the human impulse to remain. He cannot desert the dying child. If he calls the officers, the child may perhaps be saved. His humanity prevails. He signals the police and surrenders himself. The child meanwhile has died. The situation thus indicated, though grossly improbable, is obviously a good one for an actor: conflict of opposed emotions is the essence of some of the strongest and most pathetic passages in the literature of the drama; but the heroic, self-sacrificing virtue of *Regan* is even more improbable than the exceedingly artificial situations in which he is placed. Benevolent fiction has had much to say about the soul of goodness in things evil. Stern fact has failed to substantiate the assumption. If, however, the tender sensibilities of an habitual criminal be deemed natural and his ingeniously devised circum-

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stances be accepted as credible, the dramatic effect rationally follows, and the sympathy of the spectator is spontaneously and unreservedly given. The play is virtually a monologue, and Sothern was thus constrained to meet one of the most severe of all tests in acting—that of soliloquy. He met it ably and with success. He evinced deep feeling, well controlled, and a fidelity to nature indicative of habits of close observation. More than all, he signally denoted capability of sustained impersonation. Looking back to that performance, I can but think that it foreshadowed his resolute purpose to venture in the higher realm of serious, even tragic, drama.

HAMLET TO *DUNDREARY*.

It was the opinion of Garrick that "without a considerable feeling of comedy tragedy itself will be imperfectly represented." Edwin Booth, in conversation with me, expressed the same conviction. Sothern, in tragedy, has exemplified this truth. It is the absence of an attempering "feeling of comedy" that has made

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many stage spouters ponderous in their tragical endeavors. Sothern's flexibility and lightness in comedy have served him well in tragedy. That he is not, however, naturally a tragedian, because deficient in the great ground-swell of passionate emotion, the clangor of sympathetic and thrilling voice, and the sombre, commanding personality which are essential for complete tragic expression, was sufficiently indicated by his endeavors to act *Macbeth* and *Antony*. His *Macbeth* lacked power, imagination, poetry, the sense of being haunted by evil spirits, the agony of remorse, and the frenzy of desperation. His *Antony* was intelligent, well intended, earnestly executed, but it was puny. The most remarkable of his performances, because of its disclosure of his mental constitution, his character, sensibility, and control of the expedients of dramatic art, is that of *Hamlet*. The part, an incarnation of misery, is one with which he never could have been truly sympathetic and one to the exhibition of which his style was not naturally appropriate, his temperament being eager, blithe, and whimsically satirical, and his

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mind resolute, practical, and executive. He has, nevertheless, by what must have been an inveterate exercise of will, wrested himself out of the direction of his natural artistic propensity and acted *Hamlet* in such a way, judging it in its maturity and at its best, as to please a numerous public, and also to prove his title to the respect, and sometimes the admiration, of exigent critical judgment.

Representative performances by Sothern, subsidiary in importance to that of *Hamlet*, yet of exceptional, though not invariable, merit, and exhibitive of him at his best, were those of *Richard Lovelace, Villon, Rodion, Benedick, Malvolio, Heinrich,* and *Dundreary. Lovelace,* in the drama written by Laurence Irving (1871-1914), is a consummate type of the idolatrous lover,—the lover whose whole being is absorbed in devotion to a poetic ideal. The treachery of a rival, his bosom friend, has separated him,—forever, as he believes,—from the woman he loves, and for several years he dwells lonely and miserable in a lodging that she has once occupied, brooding on the past and worshipping

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the memory of a lost love. At the last, discovering that his friend has betrayed him, he passes from apathy into frenzied action, precipitates a duel with that traitor, and by his own contrivance is wounded unto death. Sothern evinced quick and deep sympathy with this ideal and complete grasp of the circumstances in which it is displayed, and he touchingly expressed that sense of the sanctity, in a lover's mind, of a woman whom he truly loves, which is characteristic of the passion in natures intrinsically noble. His feeling was genuine, and he imparted it by a perfect simulation of sincerity and by an engaging simplicity of behavior artistic in a high degree and demonstrative of the fine faculty of impersonation. That faculty was again exemplified by his performance of *Villon,* a part which compels the assumption of many and widely contrasted identities or moods, and in which the versatility of the comedian was signally denoted. As *Benedick,* when he first assumed the part, he caused the effect of sincerity, and his artistic method was direct and simple, though somewhat marred by a tinge

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of burlesque: in later expositions of that part he sometimes permitted burlesque to become buffoonery, seeming to forget that *Benedick* is both a gentleman and a resolute and formidable soldier. As *Rodion Rashnikoff*, in a play, also by Laurence Irving, based on a Russian novel, he ably and effectively embodied a half-crazed enthusiast of social reformation who deliberately murders an atrocious and brutal tyrant, in the conviction that there is no divine government of the world and that his duty is to administer vengeance. One situation presents a rehearsal of the murder, devised by an astute detective officer and accomplished in the presence of the murderer, who becomes agonized and terrified in viewing the details of his crime. In that scene Sothern displayed lively imagination and much variety of feeling, culminant in an effective frenzy: the part enabled the actor to manifest uncommon emotional power and to exemplify exceedingly well a condition of disordered mentality and a conflict of reason with cynical fanaticism. Sothern's *Malvolio* will long be remembered as the best of his persona-

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tions in Shakespearean drama, true to the author's conception of a perfectly credible character, a man of mind and ability half-crazed by conceit and "sick of self-love." In presenting himself as *Heinrich,* in "The Sunken Bell," a tumid, dreary fabric of sententious platitudes and windy symbolism, a thing innately antagonistic to drama, the comedian condescended to a bad caprice of public taste, and succeeded only in showing how cleverly he could manage a weak, fantastic part. *Dundreary,* as constructed and exemplified by Sothern's father, is a shrewd gentleman who pretends to be foolish. Beneath the apparent and comic vacuity of *Dundreary* there are sense and purpose. He is embodied whimsicality clothed with elegance. Sothern's performance was imitative of the original, but while it was not as good, it was elaborate, correct, and humorous, and it won deserved laughter and applause.

CAUSE AND NATURE OF SUCCESS.

Every actor who has achieved eminence has done so by virtue of some qualities of personal

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force or innate charm, vitalizing the faculty of impersonation, and determinative equally of the direction of his development and the feeling of his auditory. Edwin Forrest, the idol of the multitude in his day, prevailed mostly by overwhelming animal magnetism; Edwin Booth by electrical tragic power, temperamental allurement, beautiful spirituality, exquisite grace superadded to proficient art and perfect elocution; Henry Irving by an irradiant intellectual fire, poetic temperament, a strange, weird, almost sardonic humor, and a puissant faculty of arousing and thrilling the imagination. Sothern has affected the public chiefly by gentleness of personality and that graceful lucidity of impersonation which is resultant from clarity of art. The influence thus exerted has not been profound. It is potent for a time, but it is transitory, and it will not long be remembered. No one but a theatrical antiquary, like myself, now thinks of Hildebrand Horden or William Mountfort on the old English Stage, or of Edward Keach or "Dolly" Davenport among modern American actors, all

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of whom owed their evanescent repute to much the same causes which have largely contributed to the popularity of Sothern,—chivalric spirit and deferential manner toward woman. Those merits, natural, not artificial, have been conspicuous in Sothern's romantic acting, and they have particularly commended him to the female part of the theatrical audience, which is, perhaps, the most influential part of it. This comedian, however, is more a consequence than a cause,—the consequence of salutary environment in youth, combined with natural bias toward intellect, purity, and good taste in art. He has made the best of his talents and opportunities. While following old and good models, he has sought to make them contributive to pleasing results by the expedient of spectacle and by the avoidance of pedantic adherence to hide-bound stage tradition. He has produced a considerable number of new plays, and therein has done a useful service, though in only one of them, "Don Quixote," has he exhibited a great subject and attempted a great character. That play failed, partly because the theme is

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not dramatic, and partly because both the dramatist (Mr. Paul Kester) and the actor treated the character in a prosaic manner.

In the lives of the great actors of the past mention is frequently made of certain superb moments and the magnificent, electrical, overwhelming utterance of certain speeches. The playgoer whose remembrance covers the last thirty or forty years can recall such thrilling moments in his own experience of the stage: Booth's delivery of *Richelieu's* menace of excommunication; Salvini's terrific utterance of *Othello's* inexorable purpose, in "Like to the Pontic Sea"; Irving's supernatural expression of the demoniac malignancy of *Mephistopheles,* when the *Fiend* threatens *Faust* with the whirlwind of ruin; Mansfield's "Jesu, have mercy!" when *King Richard* wakens from his dream. Sothern's acting has not furnished anything of that description to be commemorated and transmitted. But while it cannot justly be said that this actor has provided any splendid, inspiring example, or made upon the Theatre and the public mind an impression destined to endure,

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it can justly be declared that he has exhibited energy and zeal, a high order of talent, much force of character, and that, as a whole, he has exerted a beneficent influence. He now (1915) largely dominates the dramatic field in America, partly because of his abilities, and partly because of the dearth, which seems to increase, of dramatic genius and artistic competition. The sum-total of his achievement is substantial and admirable, and he has richly deserved the public gratitude and esteem.

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X.

JULIA MARLOWE.

1867—19—.

Though my prose and my rhyme
Have been sometimes severe,
There was never a time
When she ceased to be dear;
And though far she may range
And new friends may prefer,
There will never be change
In my fealty to her.
She made Love and Hope blend,
To enrapture and bless;
She was comrade and friend;
She can never be less.
There is fire in the embers,
The altar is Truth.
And the old heart remembers
The glory of Youth.

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I WROTE those lines several years ago, in a mood not less sincere for being playful, to be given with a handful of flowers to Julia Marlowe at a domestic festival where we were to meet after a long absence from one another, and to which she did not come. I found them lately in one of my old note-books when I was searching for some facts about her life, and it struck me that they epitomize the essential spirit and substantial achievement of her career: "She made Love and Hope blend." The actress of whom that can truthfully be declared might willingly rest content without any other tribute to the excellence and beauty of her art. Since, however, Julia Marlowe's long, successful, beneficent, and important career is closing, and at the zenith of her powers and her fame she seeks the peace of domestic seclusion, her career and professional achievement naturally suggest themselves for commemoration.

Sarah Frances Frost, that being the true name of the actress, was born in Caldbeck, a village which nestles in the shadow of Scafell, in Cumberland, England. She is purely Eng-

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lish, her ancestors having been born and reared in that shire, the largest part of the beautiful, romantic, storied Lake District of our mother country. About 1872 her parents came to America, bringing her with them, and, after a trial of farming life in Kansas, established their home in Cincinnati. There, or in that neighborhood, she attended school, and received the best education her parents could provide. No member of her family had ever been connected with the Theatre, and no relative or teacher could have surmised that acting would become her vocation.

THE ACCIDENT OF FORTUNE.

It has been noticed that the current of a lifetime is often determined by chance. The history of modern times might, perhaps, have been radically changed if Oliver Cromwell had not been prevented from emigrating from England, as once he purposed to do, or if Clive had been sent to command the British forces in America, as was proposed when the colonies took up arms against the crown. More than

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two hundred years ago a dramatist, sitting in the bar of a London tavern, overheard a girl in the next room reading aloud from a play-book, and he was so much pleased by the sound of her voice and the fluency and sprightliness of her delivery that he sought acquaintance with her, obtained her confidence, and opened for her the way to a successful dramatic career. That girl, a dramatic genius thus accidentally discovered, was Anne Oldfield, who adorned the English Stage for twenty-five years, whose ashes rest in the cloister of Westminster Abbey, and whose name is one of historic renown. The introduction of Julia Marlowe to the stage was equally an accident. A theatrical manager in Cincinnati, having planned to produce a popular comic opera with a chorus composed of pupils from the public schools, selected her, then a girl about twelve, perceived her theatrical aptitude, and provided the opportunity for its development. That manager was Robert E. J. Miles, and under his direction she made her first appearance on the stage and passed her juvenile novitiate.

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From a Photograph by Arnold Genthe *Author's Collection*

JULIA MARLOWE AS *JULIET*

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Her stage name at first was Fanny Brough; later she adopted that of Julia Marlowe. As a child she performed in "Pinafore," "The Chimes of Normandy," and "The Little Duke," and also played the boy *Heinrich,* in a presentment of "Rip Van Winkle" made by Robert McWade. As she grew older she became associated with various itinerant stars, among them Josephine Riley and, later, the exquisite Helena Modjeska. She was entrusted with *Balthazar,* in "Romeo and Juliet"; *Stephen,* in "The Hunchback"; *Myrene,* in "Pygmalion and Galatea"; and *Maria,* in "Twelfth Night." "I remember her well," Mme. Modjeska once said to me. "She was called 'Fanny Brough' when she acted in my company, and she was a talented and interesting girl." In 1884 she withdrew from the stage, and during the next three years rigorously devoted herself to study, under the guidance and tuition of Miss Ada Dow, an experienced actress, from whom it is fair to conjecture that she derived material benefit. The inveterate spirit of detraction characteristic of human nature frequently

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insists that the actor who succeeds is "made" by the teacher. Elizabeth Barry was taught and "made" by Rochester; Rachel by Sanson; Bernhardt by Régnier; Ellen Terry by Charles Kean; Ada Rehan by Augustin Daly: so the tale always runs. Doubtless in each case the instruction was helpful: the alphabet must be learned before the student can read: but no fine actor was ever "made" by any other person. "'T is in ourselves that we are thus or thus." Julia Marlowe is a woman of independent mind, great force of character, rare intelligence, acute perception, and intrinsic, not less than cultivated, faculty of impersonation, and the rank that she has worthily gained is the consequence of powers developed by experience and employed with energy and skill.

REAL PROFESSIONAL BEGINNING.

Miss Marlowe's professional career really began in the autumn of 1887, when, at New London, Connecticut, she first appeared as a star, acting *Parthenia* in the old romantic play of "Ingomar," a poetic fable adapted, by Maria

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Anne Lovell, from a German original, and designed to illustrate the possible subjugation of semi-barbaric strength by innocent, and therefore artless, womanly loveliness. The play has been ridiculed, but, like "The Lady of Lyons," also a much disparaged comedy, it has always pleased when well acted. The part of *Parthenia* is one of extreme simplicity. The principal requirements of it are a sweet, genuine, winning individuality in the performer and the consistent maintenance of a condition of feminine enticement at once piquant and demure. Those requirements Miss Marlowe was easily able to supply. She was of the brunette type and exceptionally handsome. Her figure was slender and girlish; her movements were buoyant and graceful; her regular features, brilliant dark-brown eyes, luxuriant dark hair, melodious, sympathetic voice, and sweetly ingenuous manner,—an ingratiating demeanor which was perfectly natural,—all combined to make her exceedingly attractive. She did not need to make any effort in order to please: it was enough that she was herself.

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FIRST APPEARANCE IN NEW YORK.

To please is one thing; to gain acceptance and position on the stage is another, and much more difficult. After a short tour the intrepid young aspirant gave a metropolitan trial performance, appearing in New York for the first time. This venture was made on October 20, 1887, at the Bijou Opera House, in the character of *Parthenia,* and the talent which she then displayed, combined with her charm of personality, gave pleasure, if it did not inspire much general expectation. A little later she secured an engagement for one week at the old Star Theatre, where she appeared, on December 12, 1887, as *Juliet.* Two days later she played *Viola,* these being her first performances of those exacting parts. More than two years passed (during which she suffered a dangerous attack of typhoid fever) before she again acted in New York (1890), and it was not till about 1894 that she had succeeded in establishing herself in general public recognition. Since then, partly because of continuously persistent

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endeavor, partly because of the subsidence of powerful competition in her chosen field of artistic industry, she has advanced to eminence.

"GENIUS."

When first I saw Miss Marlowe on the stage I did not discern in her acting a denotement of the imagination, passion, power, and versatility which she has since conspicuously displayed. She seemed to be simply a charming young woman possessed of that innate capability of simulation which is characteristic of the feminine sex. An old acquaintance, Robert G. Ingersoll, whom I chanced to meet on that occasion, spoke to me about her with fervid approval. "She is a wonderful girl," he said; "she has *genius,* and by and by you will all have to acknowledge it." That prophecy has been measurably fulfilled. Little by little, as she augmented her repertory and ripened in experience of life and art, Miss Marlowe's powers were unfolded, her unique individuality was manifested, and her authority was established.

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"Genius" is a word to which almost every person who uses it seems to attach a different meaning, while some persons apparently have no clear notion of what they mean by it. Dr. Johnson defined genius as "the quality without which judgment is cold and knowledge is inert." De Quincey declared it to be "that mode of intellectual power which moves in alliance with the *genial* nature, that is, with the capacities of pleasure and pain." A definition deduced from the root of the word would call it a superior endowment of the inborn power to originate and vitalize, to give life and heat to every subject, and to communicate thrilling emotion to the universal human heart. This may have been Ingersoll's meaning in his remark to me; certainly it is mine. Opinions doubtless differ as to the question whether Julia Marlowe's acting has evinced the possession of this peculiar and splendid power. When I recall her *Viola, Juliet, Ophelia, Colinette, Countess Valeska, Beatrice,* and *Mary Tudor,* I am firmly persuaded that it has; but whether it has or not, it is certain that

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Miss Marlowe has widely diffused an enthralling influence of sweet and lovely womanhood, obtained an abiding-place in the affection of the American theatrical public, and among the actresses of to-day (1915) is the leader in legitimate, and particularly in romantic, drama.

A VARIOUS AND INSTRUCTIVE REPERTORY.

The substance of Miss Marlowe's labors is indicated by mention of the parts that she has played. In Shakespeare she has acted *Rosalind, Juliet, Viola, Beatrice, Imogen,* the *Prince of Wales,* in "King Henry IV., Part One"; *Ophelia, Katherine, Portia, Cleopatra,* and *Lady Macbeth.* In plays by other authors, old and new, she has acted *Parthenia, Pauline,* in "The Lady of Lyons"; *Constance,* in "The Love Chase"; *Julia,* in "The Hunchback"; *Charles Hart,* in "Rogues and Vagabonds"; *Letitia Hardy,* in "The Belle's Stratagem"; *Lady Teazle, Colombe,* in a play based on Browning's poem of "Colombe's Birthday"; *Romola,* in a play based on George Eliot's novel; *Kate Hardcastle, Highland Mary,* in

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"For Bonnie Prince Charlie"; *Lydia Languish, Chatterton,* in a play by [redacted] Ernest Lacy bearing that name; *Countess Valeska, Colinette, Barbara Frietchie, Mary Tudor,* in "When Knighthood Was in Flower"; *Charlotte Oliver,* in "The Cavalier"; *Queen Fiametta,* in a play so called; *Lady Barchester,* in "Fools of Nature"; *Jeanne d'Arc, Rautendelein,* in "The Sunken Bell"; *Salome,* in "John the Baptist"; *Gloria,* and *Yvette,* in "The Goddess of Reason."

At the virtual beginning of her career (for her juvenile novitiate was insignificant) she elected to assume a leading position, precisely as her distinguished predecessor Mary Anderson had done, accordant to the advice of Charlotte Cushman to "begin at the top," and throughout the twenty-eight years of her mature professional industry she continuously maintained it, not shrinking from, but, rather, seeking, competition with such established favorites as Fanny Davenport, Lillie Langtry, Helena Modjeska, Mary Anderson, Ada Rehan, and Ellen Terry. When it is noted

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that within six years after returning to the stage, and notwithstanding a retardative experience of serious illness, about 1887-'88, she had formed a repertory that included eleven of the leading characters in Shakespearean and standard legitimate drama customarily used by one or another of those actresses, it is plain she feared no "odorous comparisons."

For several seasons she made her way alone. In 1894 she was married to Robert Taber (1865-1904), who had been leading man in her dramatic company. She showed toward her husband a professional generosity which, however much it ought to be a matter of course, is, I believe, unique in the modern American Theatre, making him a co-star with herself and sacrificing much in the endeavor to establish him as such. In 1896 she and Taber were for a short time members of Jefferson's distinguished "All Star Company" acting in "The Rivals." Their marriage was not happy; in 1900 she obtained a divorce, and in 1911, in London, she was married to Edward H. Sothern.

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CHARM OF HER ACTING.

A pervasive, dominant charm of Miss Marlowe's acting was womanly loveliness. The endeavor which she occasionally made to portray parts requiring manifestation of the hard, cruel, feline, fierce, or wicked attributes possible to female human nature,—attributes supremely well displayed at one extreme by Sarah Bernhardt and at another by Charlotte Cushman,—though sometimes superficially effective, was never successful. She did not, because she could not, truly identify herself with *Cleopatra* or *Lady Macbeth*. Her performance of *Viola*, on the contrary, was lovely in grace, sympathetic in feeling, romantic in tone, piquant in humor, and therefore irresistibly winning. The gentle, tender, yet resolute, expeditious, sparkling *Viola*,—the true lover who perceives her love to be utterly in vain,—must hide her wounded heart and wear a mask of smiles, making merry and carrying sunshine wherever she goes, yet never quite concealing her wistful sadness. Miss Marlowe's intuitive grasp of

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this ideal was firm and her expression of it spontaneous. As *Highland Mary*, *Barbara Frietchie*, and *Mary Tudor*, heroines who are placed in situations not only romantic, but sometimes absurd or incredible, she nevertheless contrived to impart an air of verisimilitude while perfectly embodying a delicious type of woman, the pure, frank, generous, high-spirited, ardent beauty who truly loves, and by artistic means that seemed involuntary she made that ideal a living fact.

While, as in Goldsmith's *Kate Hardcastle* and Knowles's *Constance*, she could evince a thoroughly feminine aptitude for innocent coquetry, in no performance did she portray that obnoxious female, the vain, shallow, insincere, paltry woman who manœuvres to make herself loved in order that she may trifle with honest feeling and victimize her dupes. Her *Salome*, in the revolting play of "John the Baptist," in which neither she nor Sothern ought ever to have condescended to appear, and which, happily, was soon dropped from their repertory, was her nearest approach to an

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impersonation of that order; and even as *Salome* her essential constitution forced her to the expedient of so refining, suppressing, and changing various attributes of the character that, while it remained sufficiently objectionable, it was glossed and palliated by qualities of the actress diametrically oppugnant to those of the part. At the heart of all her representative achievements there was a healthful, sweet nature.

One of the best impersonations Miss Marlowe ever gave, illustrative of the intrinsic charm of her personality and the felicity of her art, was that of *Countess Valeska,* in a drama of that name, adapted from the German of Herr Rudolph Gratz, which she produced in the season of 1897-'98. A kindred embodiment, expositive of delicious womanhood and sparkling humor, was that of *Colinette,* in a bright and pleasing play, adapted from the French of MM. Lenôtre and Martin, which she presented in 1899. *Valeska,* generously striving to shield and save a rash lover who insists on imperilling his life, is swayed by

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From a Photograph *Author's Collection*

JULIA MARLOWE

AS *MARY TUDOR*, IN "WHEN KNIGHTHOOD WAS IN FLOWER"

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alternate impulses of love and duty and subjected to an agonizing trial, so that she must manifest a great variety of contending emotions, culminant in the dignity of a noble self-conquest. *Colinette,* more vivacious than *Valeska,* while equally earnest and devoted, is a suppliant for the life of her unjustly incriminated husband, and in circumstances of danger and afflicting suspense she wins the clemency of a king by her merry mischief not less than by her splendid sincerity of passionate feeling. Both those performances were delightful.

VERSATILITY.

It has been said in disparagement of Julia Marlowe, as it has been said of almost every superior actor, that she is "always the same." That is not true. Though all of her performances have been technically those of a proficient actress, a few have shown little more than a pallid uniformity. She has not invariably appeared at her best; but her distinctively characteristic impersonations, those by which

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she has gained renown and upon which her professional reputation securely rests, present an impressive spectacle of contrast. Complete submergence of an actor's individuality, which means total obscuration of the actor's style, may be possible, but in more than sixty years of continuous playgoing I have not seen it accomplished. The style of Julia Marlowe has been obvious in every one of her performances, and that is why they have gratified the lovers of acting and made the actress a leader in her profession. The presence of her style, however, has not made all her performances alike, any more than the presence of the style of Inness, for example,—a style which happily pervades and enriches all his beautiful paintings,—has destroyed the distinctive character of each of them. Nobody, surely, would care for a painting by Inness with the soul of Inness left out of it, and equally, I believe, nobody would care for a performance by Julia Marlowe that was not irradiated by Julia Marlowe's individuality, —her spirit, ardor, and romantic beauty. If colorless impersonality is the perfection of act-

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ing, let us at once forget the *Meg Merrilies* of Charlotte Cushman, the *Richelieu* of Booth, the *King Charles* of Irving, the *Saul* of Salvini, the *Beatrice* of Ellen Terry, the *Adrienne* of Helena Modjeska, the *Rosalind* of Ada Rehan, and concentrate our admiration on marionettes worked by wires. Great writers loom through their words, great painters through their colors, great sculptors through their marbles, great musicians through their music. The actor must inspire the acting. It is *Viola's* love and longing and sweetly patient spirit that the representative of *Viola* must display, not her own; but it is with her own person, mind, and heart that she must display them; with her knowledge of human nature and experience,—of love, hope, joy, sorrow, fortitude, resignation,—that she must vitalize the embodiment and make it enchanting and true.

"A BORN ACTRESS."

Miss Marlowe's character and attributes fitted her exceedingly well for the vocation of the stage. Her nature is uncommonly self-

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possessed and poised. Her resort to the stage, however accidental, was natural, because she not only felt histrionic impulse, as many do, but she was also endowed with histrionic faculty, which comparatively few possess. She is "a born actress," and her devotion to her art has been continuous and sincere. Moreover, being a born actress, she did what few beginners have the sense to do, even when opportunity is provided: she devoted herself to scrupulous, hard study of what she purposed to attempt. Throughout her conduct of life there was prescience. She is independent in thought, but independent with that open-minded reasonableness which bases independence upon solid conviction and which earnestly seeks for knowledge. She always sought to improve her acting, to master every subtlety of character, to render her method of impersonation smoother, more sincere, and convincing. Though she has become experienced in the ways of the world, has felt the saddening effect of hollow friendships and the bitterness of benefits forgot, and hence is capable of

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politic behavior, yet naturally ingenuous at the beginning of life, she still at heart remains so. She is "gleg at the uptak," as the Scotch have it, quickly grasping the significance of suggestions, and, where applicable, quickly utilizing them. Though her acting seldom reveals exceptional faculty of humor,—her fun, such as it is, being arch and playful,—she possesses a keen sense and enjoyment of it. She tells a good story well, with zest and with that clear brevity which is indeed the soul of wit. Sportive ridicule of serious things is, when in some moods, amusing to her. I well remember the demure sprightliness with which, knowing my antipathy to the crazy "Baconian Theory," relative to the works of Shakespeare, she professed an inclination toward belief in it. She is well grounded in the traditions of most of the standard parts which she has played; indeed, as to those which she played in her earlier years she has, I believe, more knowledge than is possessed by any other actress now on our Stage. Her personations are entirely her own: she has sought guiding light as to mean-

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ing not in tradition, but in the text of her authors and in nature, and it is her method of utilizing useful expedients of tradition in the making of effects, blended with inventions and devices of her own, and coalesced and colored in a unique personality, that has rendered her style as original and distinctive as it is engaging.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

She is of a good figure, moderately tall, and of a fine presence, which denotes innate distinction. Her face is large and handsome: the forehead is wide; the brows are strong; the eyes, large, dark, and brilliant, are now suffused with soft languor, now momentarily lit with the sparkle of glee, and strikingly expressive in passages of sentiment. The nose is straight, moderately large, clear cut, and well shaped. The mouth is large, shapely, and indicative of kindness. The chin, in the centre of which is a deep dimple, is massive, yet it denotes extraordinary sensibility. Her voice is deep, full, clear, naturally low in tone, but strong.

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She is a good speaker, her articulation being generally distinct and her delivery fluent; she shows fine discrimination as to the meanings to be conveyed by words and the nicest shading of tonal gradations. In speaking she uses at times, and often with striking effect, a singular, measured, lingering enunciation, as if orally caressing the words, and coincidentally she assumes a distrait manner, as though her mind were wrapped in an awed, fearful, wonderingly speculative contemplation of thoughts then occurrent to it and unconsciously being uttered. She is a good listener, whether on the stage or off: in acting she can make her speeches seem the utterance of thoughts prompted by words addressed to her, the workings of the mind showing first in the eyes, then in the whole expression of the face, before the words begin to come; in private life I have found her one of the few persons with whom *conversation* is possible, one who pays as much attention to what is said as she does to what she says. She seems to weigh and consider every word that she hears, showing that she

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possesses in an exceptional degree the supreme faculty of attention. In her demeanor there is a buoyant, hoydenish grace that, together with a careless manner of wearing her apparel, —Herrick's "sweet confusion in the dress,"— gives her something of a gypsy seeming. She is of high temper, can be imperious and resentful, and has been known to "speak her mind" with explicit pungency; yet she possesses a kind, generous heart and is habitually amiable and considerate. She has a large measure of that softly steady pertinacity peculiar to women. She is superficially flighty and impulsive, but is possessed of sound good sense, and is governed chiefly by prudent, restraining afterthoughts. This has sometimes made her seem insincere, which, in fact, she is not. She has been acquainted with sorrow and suffering, both spiritual and physical, and has borne them with more than common fortitude. At times she likes to mingle with the multitude, but, though sympathetic with humanity, more as a studious observer than as a participant in the every-day life of the crowd. From

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Franzensbad, in Austria, she once wrote to me: "Here this little 'cure' is overflowing with people, and were it not that I am engrossed with my parts when I am not 'curing' I should find it a frightful bore. I long for rest and calm, and if I do not soon have it I shall begin, like *Falstaff*, 'to babble o' green fields.'" She has comparatively few friends, but is sincerely attached to them.

DESIRE OF RETIREMENT.

That Julia Marlowe should wish to retire from the stage at a comparatively early age is not strange, and that she has resolved to do so is a denotement of good sense. Talent and genius are born into the world to-day as much as they were yesterday. Nature is still nature, beauty and truth are still beauty and truth; here and there in the Theatre lovely things are still seen, and brilliant abilities are honorably employed. In every period old men are to be heard who lament the faded glories of departed times: no other person is more familiar than I am with those truths as they relate to the Stage;

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no other writer, I venture to say, has been more insistent in mention of them. But having due regard for all reservations and qualifications, it is not rationally contestable that the Theatre in America to-day is, in some ways, in a deplorable condition, for which there is no analogue to be found in its history. The control of it has passed almost entirely into the hands of persons who, whether they possess exceptional business ability or not,—and, with little exception, I believe that they do not,—are unfit to administer a great public institution because they lack artistic perception and the sense of moral obligation alike to the Theatre and the Public. The Theatre is a "department store," a "shop," and the keepers of the shop boast of that fact, except when it is declared discreditable to them. If that is the right estate of the Theatre, then we who have celebrated and defended it as a temple of art and as, potentially, a great power in civilization and education, are visionaries, and should pass and cease. With the mischievous group of "shop-keeping" managers Julia Marlowe has been constrained

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to mingle, and against the stultifying, vitiating influence of it she has, like all ambitious, high-principled artists of the Stage, been constrained to contend, as well as against the often-felt surge of a vulgar mob taste. I have heard her say, in moments of dejection, "I care for nothing but the money": but that is not a true statement of her feeling. She has really cared little "for the money"; she could readily have gained more money than she has gained by doing some things which, wisely and rightly, she has left undone. She is not a Siddons, or a Cushman, or a Faucit, but she is a superb actress. The sum of her influence on the Stage and her time has been distinctly and strongly helpful, and an artist who can truthfully claim that merit is entitled to expect and to receive from the public which she has served and benefited a rich remuneration for the work.

Julia Marlowe has fulfilled herself, her artistic destiny. She might continue for a long time to repeat her best performances with profit to herself and pleasure to her auditory, but she has done her share. Among parts that she

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has not attempted there are few, if any, that she could make tributary to an ampler revelation of her faculties or a wider expansion of her beneficent influence than has already been manifested. She once thought of playing *Isabella,* in "Measure for Measure," but happily she abandoned the purpose. She might with fine effect act *Constance,* in "King John," but few auditors would be interested in it. She is wise to withdraw while she has presumably many years in which to enjoy the tranquillity and seclusion she loves: and, though her going will long be regretted, the sympathetic feeling of the public may well find expression in the lovely lines of Shakespeare:

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages."

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XI.

THE THEATRE AND MORALITY.

"The Drama's laws the Drama's patrons give,
For we who live to please must please to live."

So wrote the wise, philosophic Dr. Johnson, one hundred and sixty-eight years ago (1915), and seldom has so much incisive truth been expressed in so few words: seldom, furthermore, has a felicitous statement of truth been so frequently and so perversely wrested from its meaning as this couplet has been, for the purpose of justifying and sustaining a radically false and pernicious view of the relation between the Stage and the Public. If the Theatre is to prosper the Public, of course, must be pleased, but it does not follow that the Theatre must please the Public by giving the Public "what it wants" when it either happens to want, or is supposed to want, something

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which it ought not to have. The moral sage who wrote that couplet wrote also:

"'Tis yours, this night, to bid the reign commence
Of rescued Nature and reviving Sense,
To chase the charms of sound, the pomp of show,
For useful mirth and salutary woe,
Bid scenic virtue form the rising age
And truth diffuse her radiance from the stage."

Garrick published those words when he opened Drury Lane Theatre, September 15, 1747, and "order, decency, and decorum," says his biographer, Thomas Davies, "were the main objects which he kept constantly in his eye at the commencement of his administration."

The duty of the theatrical manager is intellectual. He is not a shop-keeper, he is the administrator of a great art. It is true that, also, he conducts a business: he must purchase plays and employ actors to represent them, and he "must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste," timing his productions so as to catch the favorable breeze of fortune: but he is under an intellectual obligation *to manage* the public as well

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as the Theatre, to promote an educational tendency, and so to foster refinement and so to cultivate the public taste,—on which the Theatre depends, and must ever depend,—that the community in which he labors will neither "want" nor tolerate any production which, either in subject or treatment, is offensive to decency or corruptive of the moral sense. Failure on the part of many theatrical managers to recognize that obligation and fulfil that duty has been especially manifest and injurious within the last fifteen or twenty years, showing itself in the gross obtrusion on the Stage, throughout our country, of exhibitions which ought never to have been made or permitted there,—exhibitions which have gradually inured a multitude of persons to the tolerance of offensive themes and largely degraded the Theatre as a social institution. The theatrical audience at this time is enormous, but, except on rare occasions, it does not, in any community, comprise a major part of the home or family public—the best public upon which any manager could depend, and the active inter-

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est of which is most essential to a pure and intellectual Stage.

The Theatre has long been compelled to withstand the active assaults of ignorance and bigotry, and it has done so with success, but the most injurious enemies of the Theatre—enemies who, if their pernicious ministry continues unabated, will, temporarily at least, force that institution as low in public esteem as it was immediately before the advent of Edwin Booth (at which time the tide was at an ebb)—are those who menace it, not from without, but from within; the speculative janitors who, by their abuse and degradation of it, place in the hands of its avowed foes a potent weapon of effective disparagement. Not long ago, because of the conduct of those mercenaries, the ecclesiastical opponents of the Stage were stimulated to a fresh attack all round the circle, and, in particular, the tremendous power of the Roman Catholic Church was aroused against the Theatre, and the (then) Archbishop of New York,—ruler of the most important See in Christendom, spiritual father and guide to

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more than a million persons,—stood in his pulpit, and preached, with uncommon vehemence, against the sinful obtrusion of vile subjects on the stage. It is known, likewise, that the clergy under his control are interdicted from attendance at theatres.

The necessity of active police interference to suppress theatrical indecencies is an ominous sign of these theatrical times, and one that should not be disregarded. In New York, Chicago, Boston, New Haven, Philadelphia, and many other cities theatres have been closed, by magisterial authority, and various offensive performances have been thus prevented. The laws are liberal, and closing the theatres could have been done only in cases in which there was distinct violation of those laws. At the same time, in various instances, plays of an obnoxious and infectious character, the vileness of which has been craftily kept "o' the windward side of the law," so as to evade suppression, have been justly condemned by impartial, authoritative censors and the better elements of society.

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Degradation and perversion of the Theatre are, to some extent, attributable to the wrong influence of a corrupt or supine press. Scathing censure of the persons, by name, who are responsible for it would tend to prevent it, but such censure is seldom permitted. Manipulation of advertising patronage controls newspapers. Furthermore the prevalent practice, in dramatic criticism, is the expression of likes and dislikes, *without specification of reasons*, coupled with a wild, wandering commentary on superficial aspects of theatrical treatment and professional demeanor; and from ebullitions of that sort neither the actor nor the reader can derive benefit. Criticism, in order to be useful, while it excoriates evil and ridicules trash, should expound, interpret, sympathize, and help,—cheering the actor who is trying to do fine things, and, if possible, winning the public to favor and sustain him. That achievement is possible to it when ably and conscientiously employed. A larger result than that is beyond its reach. It is, of course, desirable that a person who assumes the province of the dra-

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matic critic should possess the advantages of a good education, ample knowledge of theatrical history and biography, wide general reading, experience of life, sound judgment, a richly stored and ready memory, a kind heart, the saving attribute of humor, and a clear, illuminative style. But it is ever to be remembered that the dramatic critic, howsoever well qualified for his vocation, does not, necessarily, possess the specific talent of the stage-manager, gifted by nature and educated by experience, to produce a play or the interpretative talent of the qualified and trained actor to perform in it. The point at which the service of the dramatic critic becomes essential to society is the point at which the Drama directly impinges on social welfare, on the thoughts and feelings, the mental and moral condition, of the people, the trend of popular taste and sentiment. Criticism, essentially, is, or should be, for the information of the public, not the instruction of the actor. The questions, therefore, that properly engage the attention of the dramatic critic are questions of the influence and comprehensive

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general effect of plays and acting, not questions of mere technicality and detail, although, to some extent, those matters can sometimes, incidentally, be instructively considered, if the writer happens to possess the requisite technical knowledge. Observation perceives that few writers about the Stage, in any period, have possessed expert knowledge, of that description. Such knowledge is conspicuously absent from the much extolled criticisms of Hazlitt. The best of the old English critics, in that particular, was Leigh Hunt. In the contemporary press the critics are of many kinds. Callow collegians, "cub" reporters, sporting-editors, college professors, probationary divinity students, office "hacks"—those, and many others, consider themselves, and apparently are considered by newspaper editors, amply competent to write dramatic criticism, and the useless, tedious product of their abortive industry is liberally supplied. Stringent objective criticism has sometimes made itself audible, but usually it has been greeted as "destructive." A foolish disparagement! You cannot make a garden

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until you have cleared out the weeds, and in no garden do the weeds multiply more rapidly than in that of the contemporary, commercialized, "Orientalized" Stage.

The injury to good repute which is consequent on managerial misconduct, unhappily, does not fall on the individuals who are responsible for the wrong-doing and who ought to suffer for it, but upon *the institution of the Theatre*,—an institution dear to the people and as inseparable from society as the Church itself. But to condemn an institution because it has been abused by immoral persons is not less irrational than it would be to condemn and forbid the manufacture and sale of firearms because pistols have been used to commit murder, or to condemn and subvert the institution of Banking because some bankers have been swindlers and thieves. The rational course is the culture of an intelligent, pure, liberal public opinion, propitious to all that is beautiful and admirable on the stage, but inveterately hostile to every exploitation of filth and disease,—the base enterprise which would cater

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to a morbid curiosity or gather profit by pandering to the gross appetites of a vulgar mob.

The Theatre, directly and indirectly, exercises a prodigious influence. Educational institutions,—the colleges and schools of the country,—are, for the greater part, rigidly supervised, and effort is continuously made to augment their practical utility and beneficence; but the institution which is more attractive to the people than any other, the institution which, preëminently, allures and affects the young, has been allowed to fall, largely, into the baleful control of persons who are completely unfit to wield its tremendous power,—persons whose dominance of the Theatre is a social contamination,—and under that baleful control it is permitted to remain.

The conditions being thus inauspicious, it is not strange that ancient prejudice should be strengthened by modern instances against the dramatic profession. Evidence of its increasing strength has accumulated in the hands of the writer of these words, whose counsel during

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many years has been sought, by persons of all conditions, in every part of our country, relative to the choice of the Stage as a profession. The prejudice is more than unfortunate; it is deplorable. The very fact that the Theatre has, in specific instances, been abused in its administration provides the most decisive reason why the better elements of the community should turn to it and not away from it. Incessant endeavor ought to be made to insure the prevalence of rectitude, intellect, taste, and refinement in the administration of the Stage, and to secure the control of it in hands worthy to be intrusted with such a far-reaching responsibility. The Theatre is a permanent institution. It will always remain. The ranks of its professional votaries must be recruited, and they will be; and the more they are recruited from the best intelligence and the finest spirit of society the better it will be, equally for the Stage and the Public.

Choice of the Stage as a profession should rest with the aspirant. The path is a hard one, —beset with care, trial, disappointment, and

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grief,—but so is every path that leads to good results. Service of the arts is service of the intellect, and that service demands much sacrifice. The way is not strewn with roses. Objection has frequently been made to the choice of the Stage as a profession for women, and under some circumstances objection is wise and right—as, under some circumstances, it is wise and right against any other profession. As a rule, however, it arises against the Stage from ignorance and prejudice. The woman who possesses a comfortable home, agreeable surroundings, and a reasonable prospect of domestic happiness should be satisfied with her fortunate lot in life, and should refrain from seeking the toil and strife of professional emulation and the wear and tear of publicity. In most of such cases she *is* thus satisfied, and always will be. But women exist who are not contented, who desire to assert themselves as "individuals," who long for an "independent" career, and there are many women who have no choice but to enter some form of professional life. Assuming that a woman pos-

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sesses the essential qualification of dramatic talent,—without which no person, man or woman, is entitled to appear on the stage,—she can find in the dramatic profession a better opportunity of honorable subsistence than is provided by most of the vocations that are open to her sex. A most potent legitimate objection to the theatrical profession is that it is overcrowded with persons who are not naturally qualified by nature to act, and whose presence intensifies the strife for place. She must understand, moreover, that the actor is necessarily a rover; and that, accordingly, she will be compelled to sacrifice home life, with all that it implies.

The objection most frequently urged by censors of the Theatre is the alleged immorality of the dramatic profession. It cannot be denied that the long history of the Stage provides examples of dissolute behavior, as, indeed, does also the long history of the Church and of the Home. The morality of the dramatic profession, nevertheless, is commensurate with that of the society of which it forms a part. The

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record of the Actor is, for example, cleaner than that of the Clergy,—here cited in comparison because clergymen, who usually assume a tedious and irritating "holier than thou" attitude toward the rest of the world, in general, are, in particular, the most frequent and violent censors of the Actor. No sane person would, for even a moment, think of holding the Church responsible for the criminal deeds and reprehensible conduct of some of her ministers. With regard to the Theatre, on the other hand, there is no such consideration. The tone of contemporary opinion and statement, to a very large extent, is neither just nor rational. The misdeeds of individual actors are pounced upon with the utmost avidity, and, widely and very wrongfully, are charged against the *institution* of the Theatre itself, and thus much is said and done to lower that institution in the public esteem. Here again the press of our country is culpable. Every detail of the private lives of persons conspicuous in the Theatre is eagerly sought, seized on, and exploited by the newspapers, with reckless disregard of decent

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reticence, so that the members of the dramatic profession are habitually shown to the community in a glaring light of publicity, such as beats on no other class. Any young woman whose troubles happen to bring her before a police magistrate or into the divorce court, if she chooses to describe herself as "an actress," can be sure that her affairs will be flaunted at length in the press, with pictures, and made the talk of the town. That has often happened,—and not infrequently it happens that the interesting female has no more right to style herself "an actress" than a pew-opener in a church would have to style himself a clergyman, or a court door-keeper to style himself a lawyer. Sensible and liberal opinion relative to the Theatre would be only justice, and justice is due to that institution not less than to every other respectable institution in society. As to morality, in the relations of men and women, in the Theatre and out of it, the old Spanish proverb is relevant: "The world over they boil beans." Human beings are human beings,—neither better nor worse,—whether they dwell in

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hut or palace, parsonage or play-house, parlor or office.

The aspirant for dramatic efficiency and success would be wise, it may incidentally be noted, to avoid the "Dramatic School." The art of acting cannot be taught as "the three Rs" can. Certain accomplishments which are useful on the stage,—such as elocution, dancing, and fencing,—can be acquired at some dramatic schools, but, in general, they can be more advantageously acquired elsewhere. The most useful impartment of the dramatic school is the art (if, by chance, it happens to be taught) of "making up" the face and person. But the true school of acting is the stage itself. An indispensable part of the dramatic performance,—artistically speaking as indispensable to the actor as his canvas is to the painter,—is an audience. Acting without an audience is, in itself, like practising the piano upon a soundless keyboard,—futile, except to a master, who resorts to the expedient only as a means of technical exercise. The practical way is to obtain employment in a good repertory or stock company,

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resident or roving, to acquire complete self-command when before an audience and to profit by careful, continuous observance of the methods of experienced actors.

Reverting from consideration of the morality of the institution to consideration of that institution's legitimate scope and to the specious pleas advanced by those who would extenuate its misuse, it becomes pertinent to remark that insistency upon "order, decency, and decorum" in the conduct of the Theatre is as just to-day as it was in the time of Garrick, and it does not ask for compliance with a prudish standard of "prunes and prisms." It only asks that the audience shall be respected and that subjects unfit for discussion in a miscellaneous assemblage shall not be introduced on the stage. That demand, according to one of the ablest and best of English dramatists, Henry Arthur Jones,—whose plays of "The Middleman" and "Judah" are permanent and valuable additions to dramatic literature,—is made in the interest of "Silly, Rose-pink, Wax-doll Morality." But in that assumption Mr. Jones is mistaken. It

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is made in the interest of good taste, good manners, and good sense. The Theatre is not the proper place for a clinical disquisition or a detailed, literal portrayal of vicious life. Scores of "questions" arise, in general experience, which ought to be discussed and answered, and *must* be discussed and answered, —but not in plays and not by actors, in their professional occupation. Certain diseases are held to be hereditary. The use of opium is deemed destructive of the moral sense. The commission of hideous, frightful, well-nigh unspeakable crimes has been found, in some cases, to proceed from tumor at the base of the brain. The *lusus naturæ* exists. Those matters, and many others kindred with them, properly can and should engage thoughtful attention,—but not in the Theatre. A theatrical audience is composed of "all sorts of people," largely inclusive of the young of both sexes. It is in the highest degree absurd, as well as vulgar and insolent, to set before such an audience, for its futile, prattling comment, an inquiry, for example, as to remedies for the

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terrible miscegenation problem of the South, or for "the social evil." Mr. Jones and other dramatists who are of his opinion advocate the painting of "men and women as they are,"—a proceeding, in some cases, highly inadvisable, —and wish "theatre-goers to find their *pleasure* in seeing their lives portrayed at the theatre, rather than in running to the theatre to escape from their lives"; yet, probably, no contender for the "verities"—certainly no one possessed of sound judgment—would deny that human life, the world over, is burdened with care and sorrow, is hard and sad, is greatly in need of relief, and that the ideal affords the only refuge. The best of all arts is not that which copies but that which transfigures.

Contemporary plays have afforded, in every age since plays existed, at least a partial index to the spirit of the people. That spirit, in England, in the time of Queen Elizabeth and King James the First, so fruitful of drama, was vital, sensuous, luxuriant, sanguinary, distinctly animal, exultant in prosperity and pleasure. The plays produced in the period extend-

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ing from about 1550 to about 1625 (aside from those of Shakespeare, which are exceptional in many ways), when notable at all, are chiefly notable for opulence of imagery and language: some of them are grossly odious in contents. Those of Shakespeare tower above all their associates, in the respects of action and comparative purity. In the period of the Restoration, the time of King Charles the Second, general society was reckless, and the English Stage was polluted with some of the vilest concoctions of depravity that libidinous mentality has ever provided for regalement of a profligate public. A natural reaction gradually followed, and with the purification of morals and manners came improvement in the plays and in the Theatre. Periods have ensued of alternate advance and decline, but the predominant trend has been that of advance, in all the institutions that express civilization,—the Theatre among the rest.

Magnificent achievements have marked the progress of the Stage. Great genius has flamed upon the scene. Great plays have been written,

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—in this period as well as in that of "Eliza and our James,"—replete with beauty and free from offence. The Theatre, despite all abuse of its powers and all assaults on its intrinsic worth, has not only given much innocent pleasure to millions of persons, but, by its indirect and in that way most effective influence, has largely promoted the growth of intelligence, taste, and virtue. It seems strange that a necessity should at this time, or at any time, exist for advocating a just control and administration of it. The necessity does exist, however; it is urgent, and it should be obeyed, even at the risk of incurring the appalling reproach,—so sure to be invoked and so fatal in its consequences!—of being designated bourgeois in mind and nature. The wave now sweeping over the world is that of Materialism,—beneath which the spirit of Romance has been, to a great extent, submerged. The Theatre is far too much regarded on the one hand as a bauble, on the other as a shop, a mere instrumentality of gain. All sorts of commercial experiments are tried with it. Excessive luxury being rife

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throughout the world and unrest seething in almost every section of society, the appeal is, in some cases, made to any bizarre taste, or any feverous mood of discontent, or any floating whimsy of the public mind that seems likely to yield a response in "good business."

In the Theatre of France the bars of decent reticence were long ago removed. In the Theatre of England and of America a tendency has long been manifest to follow the French example. That position has been distinctly assumed by a few, at least, of prominent English dramatists, and that issue has been clearly defined by a few, at least, of prominent writers, in America as well as in England. Social problems being existent and being facile to exposition, it is proposed to convert the Stage into a forum for debate relative to all manner of taints and diseases, alike in the individual and the social system, the doctrine being (in some cases conscientiously advocated) that only in this way can "the great passions of humanity" be advantageously treated, and that the Theatre is the right place for discussion of that kind.

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Earnest, persistent, inveterate opposition to that malign tendency is imperatively required. In the course of recent dramatic seasons, including the one closing as these words are written, several plays,—some of them of domestic and some of foreign origin,—which are particularly odious and revolting in subject have been shown to the American audience, and the plea has been urged that such plays promote "a moral uplift." There are persons, happily not many, to whom such plays are acceptable,—persons who derive satisfaction from the barren contemplation of depravities, and who like the assurance (liberally provided, for example, in certain plays by the late Mr. Ibsen) that human nature is utterly corrupt, human society rotten, mankind a failure, and the world a gigantic mistake. Friends of the Theatre, however, believe that such plays are not desired by the community in general, and that they ought to be, and will be, repudiated,—the subjects desirable on the stage being such, and only such, as self-respecting persons can contemplate without disgust,—subjects from which an intelli-

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gent audience can derive the comfort and improvement that ensue from excitation of pure, generous, exalted emotion, whether joyous or sad.

A disposition to rebuke and suppress exhibitions of indecency has shown itself to exist, and apparently it is increasing. Determination to prevent an immoral use of the Theatre, whether made with brazen audacity or with pretence of right motive and "serious purpose" in the presentment of nasty "problem plays," should be sternly and effectively evinced if the Theatre, which, rightfully administered, is a public blessing, is to be saved from deterioration into a public nuisance. That determination can best be evinced not merely by censure and proscription, but by an intelligent, sympathetic, hearty support of every high and fine endeavor, and by eliciting from the best classes of intellectual, educated society a practical participation in the life of the Theatre, alike on the stage and in the managerial department.

There is no lack of material for the making of good plays, without incursion into the domain

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of monstrosity and disease; but the making of good plays out of clean, decent material,—such plays, for instance, as "Olivia," by Wills; "Pygmalion and Galatea," by Gilbert; "The Middleman," by Jones; "A Royal Family," by Marshall; "The Little Minister," by Barrie; "The Witching Hour," by Thomas; "The Thunderbolt," by Pinero, and 'The Gamblers," by Klein,—requires genuine dramatic ability, combined with deep knowledge of human nature and large experience of life; qualifications rarely possessed. On the other hand, the veriest hack, using scissors and paste-pot, can patch together, out of the police reports in the newspapers, a fabric of foul incidents and colloquies, and that has often been done; and one reason why so many obnoxious things have, of late, been imposed upon the stage is that they are so easily made, and that because of their vileness and effrontery they seem likely, being designated as "daring," to attract profit, —a soiled gain which American taste and judgment should render impossible, in the interests of Morality and the Theatre.

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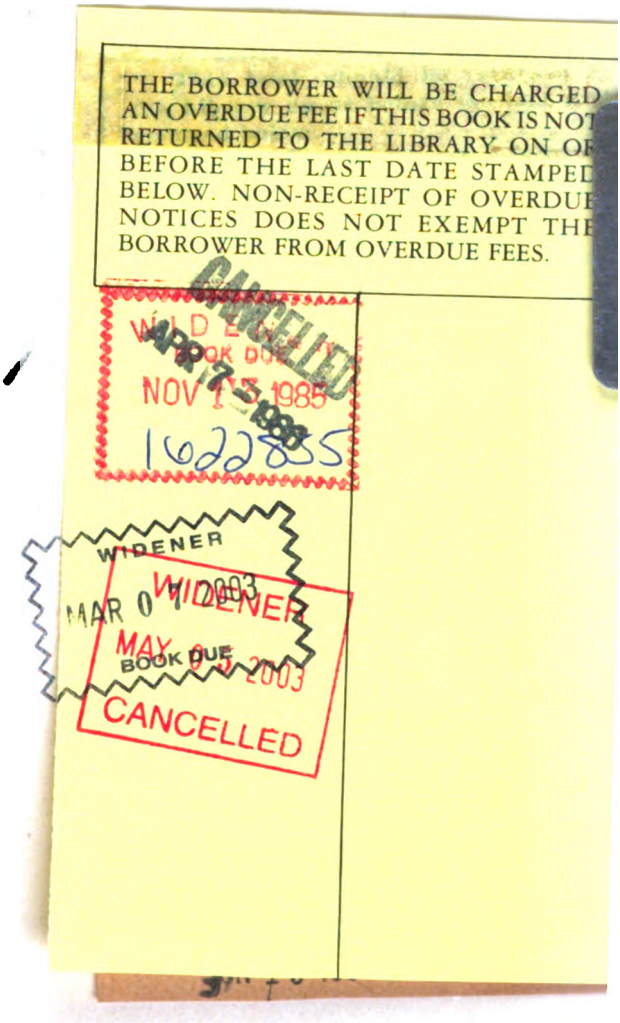

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